



THE INDEPENDENT



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MONDAY 1 APRIL 1996 40p (IR 45p)

Deep freeze plan for BSE beef

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Millions of tons of beef at risk from BSE or "mad cow disease" may have to be stored in deep-freeze warehouses until more incinerators can be built to destroy the carcasses in Britain.

Cash to build more incinerators is expected to be a key part of a £2bn deal being thrashed out today by Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, and EU ministers to restore consumer confidence and get the worldwide ban on British beef exports lifted.

The retail trade was also proposing the introduction of a

new kite mark on meat to reassure the public that beef is from BSE-free herds, after reports of a pick-up in trade. Britain was trying to secure the package last night in hard bargaining between officials over the extent of the slaughter package, the price to be paid to farmers faced with a slump in the beef market, and the amount of the bill to be met by the British taxpayer.

Ministers have accepted that the key to restoring confidence is the selective disposal plans, and have been considering a massive programme for up to 4.5 million cows, demanded by the National Farmers' Union.

The nine existing incinerators in Britain could not cope, but British ministers have privately ruled out burning the carcasses in open fields. The *Independent* source: "We will have to build more facilities. We can't have burning in the fields. It's got to be done in a properly controlled way."

Most of the condemned meat may have to be stored in deep freeze until it can be destroyed. In order to restore public confidence in the beef industry, it would have to be stored in tight security to avoid it finding its way on to the black market. The nine privately owned in-

cinerators could cope with 3,000 carcasses a week. If they ran round the clock. Some estimates suggest up to 15,000 carcasses a week may have to be destroyed, if the large-scale plan is adopted. That could require an additional 36 incinerators, at a cost of £1m each, but the use of storage could reduce the number of new incinerators to single figures.

Sir David Naish, the NFU president whose slaughter plan forced a Government U-turn last week, hinted at the plans on the BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*. "Obviously at the moment, the incineration capacity is not there. But in today's techno-

logical advances, there is no doubt at all it quickly could be put in place. The animals would have to be slaughtered properly in slaughter houses to make sure the brain and the spinal cord were removed, and were burnt at high temperature.

"All the meat that could not be burnt straight away could be temporarily stored. I accept there is a logistics problem, but this is much deeper than logistics."

Ministers have not yet produced detailed plans of where additional incinerators could be built, but they may be close to existing sites to limit planning problems. A ban was imposed

last week on the sale of beef from cattle over 30 months old most at risk from BSE. Milk is not affected.

Mr Hogg will today press the European Commissioner, Franz Fischler, for the ban to be lifted before negotiating the final details with agriculture ministers in Luxembourg.

Sir Leon Brittan, the vice-president of the commission, said the European Union was ready to bear a "serious" proportion of the cost if a mass slaughter of British cattle was necessary to quell fears on beef safety.

He indicated that Brussels could foot the bill for anything

between 50 per cent and the full cost of any large-scale culling. The extent to which the British taxpayer will have to pick up part of the bill was one of the issues being discussed by officials yesterday.

The Cabinet source said it would be "ridiculous" to carry on destroying cattle and burning the beef, for years ahead, after BSE had been eradicated.

Some senior Tory MPs believed Mr Hogg would be moved in the summer reshuffle by the Prime Minister, but that has now been made impossible by weekend reports that his resignation had been rejected by the Prime Minister. The Tory counter-

attack on Labour has secured Mr Hogg's Cabinet position.

There were continued angry recriminations for the collapse in the beef market. Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, rejected a charge by Tony Blair, the Labour Leader, that the Government had been incompetent.

"I have never heard Opposition politicians behave so disgracefully and so put at risk the national interest because they thought they could grab a few votes," Dr Mawhinney said on the BBC's *On the Record*.

Supermarket sales up, page 2
Lost faith in scientists, page 17
1866 cattle plague, page 19

Diplomats face Iraq arms charge

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Two British diplomats may face criminal prosecution for perverting the course of justice in the case of the arms dealer Reginald Dunk, who was wrongfully convicted of exporting machine-guns to Iraq.

And for the first time in the arms-to-Iraq saga, the Home Office has agreed to pay compensation in what amounts to tacit admission that Mr Dunk was denied a fair trial.

The diplomats - Zambia High Commissioner Patrick Nixon and the Ethiopian number two Carsten Pigott - have been named in the Scotland Yard report into Mr Dunk's successful appeal in 1994 against his conviction nine years earlier. The findings have been sent to the Crown Prosecution Service. Both diplomats were named and criticised in the Scott Report for pressing possible defence witnesses not to testify in the businessman's trial.

Documents submitted to the Scott inquiry revealed officials had "friendly words" with ambassadors from Iraq and Jordan, telling them to claim diplomatic immunity for their staff and asking them not to help Mr Dunk. Mr Nixon and Mr Pigott, then desk officers in London,

EXCLUSIVE

oversaw the operation. Sir Richard Scott said the two men could not have "supposed otherwise" that their behaviour amounted to impeding the course of justice.

The decision by Michael Howard, Home Secretary, to accept a claim by Mr Dunk's so-



Reginald Dunk: Wrongful conviction for Iraq exports

licitor for compensation for his wrongful prosecution is an indication of how seriously the Government views the case. It is also a possible attempt to avoid his going to court and causing more embarrassment.

Mr Dunk's solicitor, Lawrence Kormonick, said: "The Home Secretary has decided to make

a payment to Mr Dunk from public funds as compensation in respect of his conviction on 4 November 1985 which was subsequently reversed by the Court of Appeal."

Mr Kormonick is now preparing a schedule of loss for his client which is likely to total more than £500,000. Overnight, following his conviction, business dried up and clients stayed away. He had to cut jobs and dip into his life savings to keep the company afloat.

In 1985, Mr Dunk, now 76, who ran Atlantic Commercial, a private arms-dealing firm, was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £7,500 costs, after pleading guilty to attempting to smuggle 200 Sterling sub-machine guns to Iraq via Jordan. Alexander Schlesinger, a consultant to Atlantic, was also fined. A third defendant James Edmiston, was acquitted.

At the trial Mr Dunk changed his plea from not guilty to guilty after Jordanian and Iraqi diplomats in London refused to appear in his defence.

Mr Pigott told the Scott inquiry he and Mr Nixon had acted in good faith and pointed out they were acting at the request of Customs, the prosecuting authority, which they assumed had "cleared their lines from the legal standpoint".

Down to earth with 3.8 million miles on the clock



The space shuttle Atlantis comes into land at the Edwards air force base in California after its 10-day, 3.6 million mile odyssey Photograph: AP

IN BRIEF

Welsh Glyndebourne

The singer Dame Gwyneth Jones has bought Craig-y-nos castle in the Upper Tawe valley in south Wales to turn into an opera teaching and performing centre which she is giving to the nation. Page 3

Drinks ads offensive

Martini's campaign featuring ugly people who needed cosmetic surgery to consume the beautiful people's drink has been ruled offensive by the Independent Television Commission. Page 9

Today's weather

Everywhere will have some sunshine, but Scotland and Northern Ireland will have some showers. Page ref

Blair throws Major TV gauntlet

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

A head-to-head televised debate between John Major and Tony Blair was in prospect last night after Brian Mawhinney, the chairman of the Conservative Party, refused to rule out the challenge for the Prime Minister and the Labour leader to face each other in the run-up to the general election.

The event would mark a dramatic shift in British politics towards the style of the United States presidential elections, where such contests are now part of the routine of the hustings, and can count heavily in the leaders' perceptions of the party leaders.

It would be the first time that a prime minister had been pre-

pared to enter a public debate on television with the Leader of the Opposition. Margaret Thatcher refused to join in televised debates with Neil Kinnock on the grounds that it enhanced his esteem. Mr Major has previously brushed Labour calls for debates aside with contempt, branding them a game for losers.

But Tory strategists believe there could be a clear advantage in a contest. Mr Major led his party in the opinion polls at the last election by several points, and the party is certain to exploit his personal appeal.

The Tories also have a trick up their sleeves, if they agree to the match. They are likely to say they will go ahead, providing Labour puts up other front-benchers in similar debates.

The Tories want to see: John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader against Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister; Margaret Beckett, Labour's spokeswoman on trade and industry, against Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade; and Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokeswoman, against the Secretary of State Stephen Dorrell.

Mr Blair yesterday seized on the idea, which emerged in informal contacts between the television producers and Conservative Central Office aides. The Labour leader said he would be "delighted" to accept the challenge.

"I am taking this more or less as a firm offer, in which case it is accepted with alacrity," he said on BBC1's *Breakfast With Frost* programme.

"If they want to have a debate there is a very simple way of having it, which is to bring forward the date of the general election."

"I don't believe there is any purpose or reason in governing left for this government. They are weak, they are incompetent, they are drifting. They have given no direction to the country whatsoever and if they want to put this to the test they should put it to the test sooner rather than later."

Meanwhile, an April Fool's prank by the Labour Party was expected to enrage Tory leaders at Conservative Central Office today. A spoof advertisement was placed in a national newspaper urging readers to telephone the Tory headquarters in Smith Square to claim a £2,050 refund in backdated tax relief.

Traffic wardens face the flak

JOJO MOVES

Traffic wardens have always expected a degree of hostility - the two-fingered salute or the odd expletive, perhaps. But Cardiff's wardens are apparently anticipating something more - they are being fitted with bullet-proof body armour.

Police in South Wales say their meter men and women are facing a rise in assaults and the use of weapons as they try to enforce parking regulations.

They are fitting at least 100 wardens with flak jackets which can withstand the blast of a .357 magnum handgun at close range. The jackets are part of

a wider move to fit 3,000 police officers in South Wales with protective clothing.

The bullet-proof or stab-proof vests, also issued to colleagues in the seaside town of Redcar in Cleveland, have been welcomed by the traffic wardens union, Unison. It claims its members need more protection.

Last year traffic wardens in South Yorkshire began training in martial arts, while wardens in the London borough of Hackney were given self-defence lessons after 16 needed hospital treatment in nine months.

Assaults ranged from a baseball bat attack to being thrown across a car bonnet.



But some of Cardiff's wardens are not convinced that the jackets will protect them against road-raging motorists.

One warden said yesterday: "Drivers don't shoot or stab us - they try to run us over. I can't see a flak-jacket giving us much protection against that."



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ADYA

RIZLA

TV team's discovery of Jesus' tomb dismissed by scholars

BREW BROWN

Religious Affairs Correspondent

Reports that the tomb of Jesus Christ might have been found by a television crew looking for a special Easter special were yesterday dismissed by scholars.

"I thought it was an April fool day too early," said Professor

Geza Vermes, probably England's leading authority on first century Judaism, about a report in the *Sunday Times* that a casket which had once contained bones identified as those of "Jesus son of Joseph" had been found in an ancient warehouse in Jerusalem, where it has rested since 1981.

The team from BBC 2's *Heart of the Matter* programme believed that the significance of this discovery might have been overlooked by a Jewish archaeologist: the bone casket was found in a 1st century tomb alongside those of two women called Mary, a Matthew, and someone identified as "Juda,

son of Jesus". All were empty, having been looted long ago. "It is easy to miss their significance simply because they have none," said Professor Vermes yesterday. "These are among the most common names in the Palestine of that period. A Jewish archaeologist, seeing these names, would

simply think 'Oh, more of them'. His incredulity was echoed by the Dean of Lichfield, Dr Tom Wright. "This is no more than an interesting coincidence. Any suggestion that the other names refer to Jesus's mistress and illegitimate son are utterly laughable." He said the body would have had to have been

left in its original tomb for a year to decompose. The bones which remained would then have been removed and placed in a special casket or ossuary. These were collected in the tombs of an extended family. Ten ossuaries marked with the name of Jesus have been found in and around Jerusalem.

Amos Kloner, of the Israel Antiquities Authority, was also dismissive. "I would not say that it deserves a special interest other than the chance of the appearance of the names... I can't say a possibility that it is the tomb of the Holy Family does not exist at all, but I think such a possibility is close to zero."

A belief that the bones of Jesus could not be found, even by the most reliable archaeological methods, is entailed by Christian orthodoxy. He was, the Bible says, raised from the dead and his first tomb found empty, so that there would have been no bones to transfer to a later ossuary.

Unmarried mothers face losing benefits

JENNA COOPER

Up to 50,000 unmarried mothers face losing their benefits in the Government's latest crack-down on social-security fraud, after Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, is expected to announce new measures tomorrow to try to cut 100m-a-year fraud from the Child Support Agency.

The news comes as a report by some mothers have been under "considerable pressure" to co-operate with the agency despite evidence that their former partners were violent. The study, by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, published on the third anniversary of the Child Support Act, also says poorer families have lost out under the radical reforms of the CSA and that working mothers claiming daily Credit have been unable to rely on maintenance being paid regularly to them by the CSA.

Mr Lilley's proposals are aimed at mothers who claim benefits while secretly getting on from ex-husbands and girlfriends. It will be disclosed in a report to be sent to the all-party Commons Social Security Select Committee this week.

Last year Frank Field, chairman of the committee, told the Commons the agency knew of at least 16,000 cases where divorced or separated parents were colluding "to defraud the taxpayer".

At present women are allowed to withhold the father's name if they have a good reason or it would cause "harm or undue distress".

By alleging she is in danger of being beaten up or threatened by her ex-partner, a mother on benefit can stop maintenance being enforced through the CSA.

Subject to an interview, she can continue to receive full benefit and the absent father pays nothing - or at least nothing through the agency.

A spokeswoman for the CSA said that when women refused to name the father "we have to take each case on individual merit. Our officers have to be very careful and look at all different factors before making a decision".

At present those who do not co-operate with the CSA face having their benefit cut by 20 per cent for six months and then 10 per cent for a further 12 months.

But Mr Lilley wants an immediate 40-per-cent reduction

on lone parent benefits of £46.50 a week if the mother fails to co-operate with the CSA. He is said to be considering stopping the benefit altogether but this would need new legislation.

Benefits paid for each child - £15.95 a week for under 11 and £23.40 for those aged 11 to 15 - would not be affected.

But the Rowntree report said that some mothers who had asked to be exempted from providing information about the fathers of their children on the grounds of "harm or undue distress" had come under considerable pressure to co-operate despite evidence that their former partners were violent.

Karin Pappenheim, director of the National Council for One Parent Families said: "It is extremely important that the provisions to protect vulnerable lone mothers and children are maintained for the many mothers who have very genuine reasons not to involve the father. That protection has been working well."

It is essential fraud is tackled but it would be a tragedy if that is achieved through measures that may jeopardise the safety of women and children who are genuinely at risk."

Boy, 12, dies in fire on night adventure

A 12-year-old boy died yesterday after fire broke out in a garage where three friends had spent the night as an adventure. The boys had told their parents that each was staying at the derelict house on the Roundhills Estate in Waltham Abbey, Essex. Instead, they slept on a old mattress in a garage used for storage.

The children used candles to light the garage beneath three flats. The fire broke out after one of the children left to do a newspaper round. Thomas Flynn, the boy who died, is thought to have been overcome by smoke as he slept. He was not until firemen had put out the fire that his body was recovered. His two 12-year-old friends were later being comforted by their families. An 84-year-old woman who lived above the garage was treated for smoke inhalation.

Police said an inquest would be held into the boy's death. Essex fire brigade said the garage was used by the parents of one of the boys to store furniture. Thomas's body was

found as firefighters were turning over and damping down remains at the back of the garage.

Scotland Yard said a post mortem examination would be held today at St George's hospital, in Ilford, Essex.

The dead boy's family later spoke of their grief at the "stupid accident" which robbed of them of the football-loving boy, who had three sisters, Rosie, 18, Michelle, 17, and Joni, 15.

A distraught Michelle said: "It was such a stupid accident. It was nobody's fault, just one of those things. It was just a normal sleep-out, just a camp-out in a friend's garage."

Other relatives described Thomas, who attended the King Harold school in Waltham Abbey, as a fun-loving child who liked nothing better than kicking a football around with friends. His dream was to play for his favourite team, Spurs.

Tommy's mother Barbara, 38, a teacher, was too grief-stricken to speak.

Groups of parents and children later gathered outside the burned-out garage to pay their respects. The families left tributes and said quiet prayers.

Floral tributes with messages written by children were left by the charred garage door. One group of children said: "He was a great friend and he loved to play football, any sport and computers."

Thomas Flynn: Overcome by fumes in garage fire

Welsh Glyndebourne: Gwyneth Jones plans festival at Victorian singer's castle



A Welsh Glyndebourne: Dame Gwyneth Jones and the architect Roger Clive-Powell (above) in the Victorian theatre created at Craig-y-nos, South Wales (below); by the celebrated diva Adelina Patti, which they plan to restore as a centre for opera. Photographs: Rob Stratton

Modern-day diva rides to the rescue of Mme Patti's theatre

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

Welsh opera lovers, still in mourning after the Millennium Fund's refusal to back a new opera house in Cardiff, have had their spirits lifted at the prospect of having their own Glyndebourne.

The internationally renowned Welsh soprano Dame Gwyneth Jones has bought the romantic castle of Craig-y-nos, in the Upper Tawe Valley of South Wales, and has gifted it to the nation. The castle will become a teaching and performing centre for opera.

To help finance the castle's purchase, Dame Gwyneth sold a property in Vienna. The gift to the Welsh nation also includes funds to establish a trust and manage it. "This is going to be my gift to my country from which my career has taken me away for so long," she said.

Following the Millennium Fund's decision not to make a grant to the £86m Cardiff Bay opera house, it is hoped that Craig-y-nos will grow to rival the annual Glyndebourne summer festival, in the shadow of the South Downs in East Sussex.

Fittingly, Craig-y-nos was once the home of another renowned opera singer, the Victorian *bel canto* soprano Madame Adelina Patti. It contains a 150-seat theatre for opera that still features some of the original scenery.

Dame Gwyneth, born at Pontnewydd, near Cwmbran, now lives in Switzerland and is best known for her performances in the dramatic soprano repertoire as Puccini's Turandot, Wagner's Brunnhilde, and Richard Strauss's Elektra. She was at the castle this weekend. "The moment I stepped inside its gates," she said, "I fell under the spell of Craig-y-nos. When I stood in the music room I had this vision of the castle coming back to its former glory."

"It is going to be a place for young people to study and will hopefully see an end to Welsh singers having to go to London when they should be studying at home. There will also be summer festivals."

The Dame Gwyneth Jones Patti Trust will administer the castle and applications will be made to the Lottery and the Arts Council for grants towards the £6m cost of restoring it to its Victorian splendour.

The castle was bought by Mme Patti, in 1878. She lived there until her death in 1919, adding extensively to it. After her death, it was used as a hospital until a consortium of local businessmen bought it in 1986, but their plans to turn it into a hotel and restaurant were hit by the recession.

The architect Roger Clive-Powell envisages the present project will take three years to complete. The institutional buildings from its days as a hospital will be removed and the original terraces, gardens and open auditorium restored.

Penny Jones, wife of the previous owner, Dr J T Jones, will be a trustee. She said: "It is very fitting that it is our own Welsh-born, world leading soprano Gwyneth Jones, who is doing this. That she is resurrecting what was Adelina Patti's country home makes it doubly so. From a diva of the past to one of the present."

Mrs Jones said it was an important part of Wales's heritage that needed to be preserved.

Four in court on kidnap charges

JO MOYES

Four people will appear in court today charged in connection with the three-day kidnap of a 27-year-old woman. On Friday night, officers from the Organised Crime Group freed the woman, who had been held to ransom by an armed gang since Wednesday. Large amounts of money, including drugs and firearms - including five handguns - were recovered.

The four accused, include a husband and wife, plus the husband's brother.

All are being held in custody and will appear at Hounslow Road magistrates court, in central London.

Barclay George Walters, 37, unemployed, from Harlesden, north-west London, is charged with kidnapping and false imprisonment, and three firearms offences, including possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life.

Anurudh Sharma, 31, also unemployed, and his brother Sanjeev Sharma, 27, both of Hounslow, west London, are

charged with kidnap and false imprisonment.

Sanjeev Sharma's 25-year-old wife, Dipty Sharma, also of Hounslow, is also charged with false imprisonment.

A fifth suspect, a 23-year-old female student has been released on bail to return on 13 April, pending further inquiries. Two other suspects were released without charge.

The victim suffered several injuries and was treated in hospital under police guard. She was discharged on Saturday and her condition was

Betting frenzy leaves punters out of pocket

About £200m was believed to have been wagered over the weekend in what is believed to have been Britain's biggest ever flutter.

Millions of people gambled on a host of top sporting events which coincided for the first time with the National Lottery, but the vast majority ended up out of pocket.

In the Grand National, the housewives' choice Superior Finish, finished a disappointing third and a few hours later no one scooped the lottery jackpot.

Perhaps most disappointed was an anonymous punter from Sale in Greater Manchester, who was just 90 minutes away from winning £183,000 on a £5 stake.

He was hoping Aston Villa would win their FA Cup semi final to clinch a 12-way bet, but they lost 3-0 to Liverpool.

Manchester United, who beat Chelsea 2-1 had earlier become his 11th correct prediction and he had already forecast the results of 10 matches on Saturday.

A Ladbrokes spokesman said: "You cannot describe what those 90 minutes must have been like for him. We may never know who he is now. It was the bet of a lifetime running on to two exciting semi-finals."

An estimated £70m was riding on the 28 runners at Aintree. And although favourite Rough Quest rode home victorious, an army of once-a-year gamblers

leaving bookmakers faced with a £2m pay out if it won. Many had been lured to gam-

ble by the promise that the unusually small field gave them the best chance of picking the winner in a generation.

Money poured in on the 9-1 shot trained by Jenny Pitman, known as the "Queen of Aintree", and ridden by Richard Dunwoody.

But Superior Finish eventually came only third - a result which did leave the bookies smiling, however.

Graham Sharpe, of William Hill, said: "It was a pretty good day and we certainly paid out

less than we took. It would have cost us lots more if Superior Finish had won or done better than third."

"The public - especially the once-a-year gambler - had latched on to it because of who trained it and who was riding it. "If it had come in it could have been disastrous for us," he said.

In the National Lottery, there was no jackpot winner, and fans of the weekly draw can now look forward to competing for a £20m rollover prize next week.

The every-day chocolate bar keeps the Easter egg in its place

Cocobolies need not spend a fortune to satisfy their craving for Easter, according to top chocolate expert Ronay. He ranked 16 different chocolate bars, and found the cheaper ones fared surprisingly well against luxury alternatives.

Of eight dark chocolate bars, the cheapest, Marks & Spencer's Swiss Extra Fine, at

59p per 100g, easily came out top. The bar's "excitingly powerful" character nudged into second place the "good but absurdly expensive" (£3.10 per 100g) offering from Fortnum & Mason, the superior food emporium in Piccadilly, central London.

Out of eight milk chocolate bars sampled separately, the £3.10 Fortnum & Mason bar was

judged equal second with Galaxy - a relative snip at 62p per 100g.

Both were beaten, however, by Lindt Swiss Milk, which was praised for its "impressive balance between sugar and chocolate".

Bottom of the dark chocolate test was the German-made Ritter Sport, dismissed as "crude", while the United States-made

Hershey bar came last in the milk chocolate league. "You need to be Sherlock Holmes to discover a chocolate taste in this," Mr Ronay said.

Of other popular high street brands tasted, Cadbury's Dairy Milk came fifth in the milk section and Bourneville seventh among the dark chocolates.

Nestle's milk chocolate Yorkie bar finished only ahead of the

Hershey bar, with Mr Ronay describing it as "sickly sweet and a crude taste".

Overall, he said that he was surprised at the wide differences between the various chocolates. "There are more differences between the chocolate bars than meet the eye. The lesson is that it's well worth making sure you choose a good chocolate."

A spokeswoman for Fortnum & Mason said: "Our chocolate bars are handmade by a small, independent chocolatier using fine-quality ingredients."

"As they are not mass produced we do not enjoy the economies of scale in production of large companies, but we do ensure its taste is maintained by a high percentage of cocoa solids."

Paul Kirkwood, a spokesman for Nestle Rowntree, defended the company's product, saying: "The results of the survey are not reflected by Yorkie's recent market performance."

"Since last year's relaunch, sales of single Yorkie bars have increased by 15 per cent to £36m, demonstrating Yorkie's continued and widespread popularity."

Gavin Tarrant, of Lindt UK, said: "I am not surprised that our milk chocolate came out top, but I am surprised that the plain chocolate did not win."

A spokeswoman for Mars, manufacturers of Galaxy, said: "We are delighted with the results. Galaxy is a very smooth, creamy chocolate which consumers like."

THE REFERENDUM PARTY

**A single currency is only one
of the many fundamental
problems of the European Union.**

**Here is another.
European Law already overrules
British Law.**

Each year, the European Commission and the Council issue thousands of pages of "regulations and directives", which we in Britain would call laws.

According to the Treaty,¹ European law (ie "regulations and directives") "shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States".²

The European Court of Justice stated: "Every national court must apply Community law in its entirety and must accordingly set aside any provision of national law which may conflict with it, whether prior or subsequent to the Community rule".³

It is now generally accepted by British judges that "the Treaty is the supreme law of this country taking precedence over Acts of Parliament".⁴ The courts of the United Kingdom have therefore accepted that their duty is to ensure the full and effective rule of Community law, even if it contradicts the unequivocal provisions of Acts of Parliament. Thus, Parliament has surrendered its sovereignty and the Treaty of Rome, as amended by the Single European Act and Maastricht, in effect, has become a written and supreme constitution.

The former Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning, stated, "No longer is European Law an incoming tide flowing up the estuaries of England. It is now like a tidal wave bringing down our sea walls and flowing inland over our fields and houses to the dismay of all".⁵

So it is that Parliament has given up its right to pass laws on an ever increasing range of issues.⁶ That is why the referendum is necessary and one of the reasons why a referendum restricted to the issue of a single currency is insufficient.

If the people of Britain want the nation's laws to be enacted in Brussels, then they should be able to say so. The consequence would be that the electoral promises of the political parties would need to be limited to those issues over which they would retain some authority.

If, on the other hand, the British people want to bring power back home, they should also be allowed to say so. Should a majority agree, and the government acts accordingly, then laws enacted in Westminster could once again be supreme and general elections would no longer be the masquerade with which we are now faced.

If you wish to become a supporter of The Referendum Party please write to:

5 Galena Road, Hammersmith, London W6 0LT. Tel: 0181-563 1155. Fax: 0181-563 1156.

1. The Treaty of Rome as amended by the Single European Act and the Treaty of Maastricht. 2. The Treaty of Rome, Article 189(2). 3. Case 106/77 Amministrazione delle Finanze dello Stato v. Simmenthal (1978) ECR 629 at 643, 644. 4. Hoffman J. in Stoke-on-Trent City Council v. B&Q plc (1990) 3 CMLR 31 at 34. 5. Introduction to Gavin Smith, The ECJ: Judges or Policy Makers? 6. The original Treaty of Rome principally covered matters relating to the establishment of a common market. Maastricht radically expanded the areas of Europe's legal competence and went well beyond purely economic matters. The purpose, unequivocally, had become the creation of a European super-state.

Prosecution
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to 'more'

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Wrongful prosecution: Home Office admission leads to businessman's call for action against diplomats for abusing legal process

Cleared arms dealer presses for compensation

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Minister Correspondent

His home in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, yesterday Reginald Dunk was sanguine about the fact that the Home Office had accepted he was wrongfully prosecuted 11 years ago for attempting to smuggle 200 Sterling sub-machine guns to Iraq in defiance of an arms embargo, and that senior diplomats may now face prosecution for denying him a fair trial.

He said Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, had still to accept his much larger claim for compensation for his company which was almost wiped out by conviction, and there is always the possibility that the diplomats concerned may not be prosecuted if the Crown Prosecution Service decides it would not be in the public interest.

Mr Dunk feels that the fact all happened such a long time ago and the obvious sensitivity of the matter might yet rule in the diplomats' favour, although he could not see why. "If they are people who abused the process of law they should be prosecuted shouldn't they? That is sauce for the goose could also be sauce for the gander," he said.

Now aged 76, Mr Dunk says that he will never forget the trauma of the events of 1983 when Customs and Excise officers simultaneously raided his house and office in Mansfield, his daughter's home in London, his son's house in Guildford, Surrey, and his accountant's

offices in West Yorkshire. Alexander Schlesinger, a consultant to Atlantic Commercial, Mr Dunk's company, and executives from the gun manufacturer, Sterling Armament Company, also had their homes and offices raided.

Mr Dunk estimates the operation must have cost the taxpayer about £50,000. Seven officers visited just his house and searched it from top to bottom, including rummaging through his wife's wardrobe.

His son who knew nothing about the Jordan deal, was taken from his house in Surrey to the Customs Interrogation Unit in London, where he was detained overnight.

Despite having a valid export licence from the Department of Trade and Industry and despite being able to produce assurances from the Iraqi Embassy in London that the guns were not for Iraq but were a gift from Iraq to the Jordanian army, Mr Dunk's prosecution went ahead.

He was confident he had done nothing wrong and pleaded not guilty. But when his lawyer tried to take statements from Iraqi and Jordanian embassy staff in London he received a setback. The solicitor was told the authority for them to appear in his defence had been withdrawn. Unknown to Mr Dunk, the Iraqi and Jordanian ambassadors had been leant on by the Foreign Office.

Customs did not believe the claim that the guns were a gift and were not intended for Iraq, and was determined to secure a conviction. Its officers had asked the Foreign Office to persuade the Iraqi and Jordanian diplomats not to appear.

Without corroboration for



Bitter memories: Reginald Dunk, who says the years of fighting for justice have taken their toll on his health. Photograph: Stuart Harrison/NewsTeam

his story Mr Dunk had no choice but to change his plea. In 1985, at the Old Bailey he pleaded guilty and was fined £20,000. It was only when the Scott arms-to-Iraq inquiry

looked behind the prosecution that the truth, and details of the behaviour of Patrick Nixon and Carsten Pigott - then desk officers at the Foreign Office in London - came out. In July

1994, Mr Dunk's conviction and that of Mr Schlesinger were overturned by the Court of Appeal.

Mr Dunk said that it was only then that his business started to

recover. "From February 1983, when Customs carried out their raid, until July 1994, when we won our appeal, the business was virtually non-existent. Not only was it not profitable, but I

had to sacrifice almost all my life-savings to keep the company afloat - savings which had been earmarked as a supplement to my state pension," he said.

What had been a thriving business had been reduced by the end of 1993 to a virtual shell with no employees and no customers. Mr Dunk carried on trying to secure orders, "in the hope that eventually people would forget we were convicted criminals".

It was a vain hope: clients like British Aerospace and Vickers had long since ceased to associate with him. When he won his appeal business started to return and his once-desperate company is back in profit again. However, the damage over the years has been considerable and not only financial.

"My health and that of my wife has suffered enormously as a direct result of the worry and stress of the last 11 years," Mr Dunk said. "Aged 76, I am also no longer able to forecast when I shall be able to retire."

Even though the Home Office has accepted his compensation claim he is not expecting miracles. He has yet to receive a penny and the Government is still refusing to acknowledge the loss to his company.

Lawrence Kormonick, Mr Dunk's solicitor, said yesterday: "He would like to see those responsible have to go through what he went through. He feels given what happened it would be in the interests of justice for those people to be treated as any others."

Privatisation leads to 'more rail crime'

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Warning that rail privatisation leading to an increased level of crime on the railway network is issued by the HM Inspector of Constabulary yesterday. The inspector who carried out the investigation into the performance of the British Transport Police, Peter Winship, says that the recent changes the railway have led to an increase in crime and a worse law-and-order situation.

His report says that both senior managers and BTP officers saw a direct link between the increase in crime, together with a reduced number of detections, and some of the changes that had occurred within the railway industry.

These changes include the withdrawal of staff from stations, open access to railway premises, the increasing use of over-only trains and the reluctance of rail staff to 'patrol' some late-night services". Mr Winship says that because of the reduced level of staffing, there are fewer witnesses to crimes and therefore less chance of catching the culprits. Many of these changes result from the drive to reduce subsidy to the railways in the run-up to privatisation.

Rail privatisation has also hindered anti-crime initiatives by the BTP because many different and uncoordinated parts of the rail industry are involved. Mr Winship says: "Rail privatisation will undoubtedly impact on joint initiatives. . . Under the new privatised structure, there is evidence of increasing parochialism as railway businesses, understandably, look for more localised business-specific initiatives."

Mr Winship also suggests that rail privatisation may be distorting the priorities of the police. He commends the BTP for

its effective marketing, but says that while "the needs of the railway businesses understandably feature prominently in the Force priorities", the BTP needs to pay more attention to the needs of the public, both travelling and local.

Railtrack came under fire today for telling its own staff not to travel by rail to business meetings.

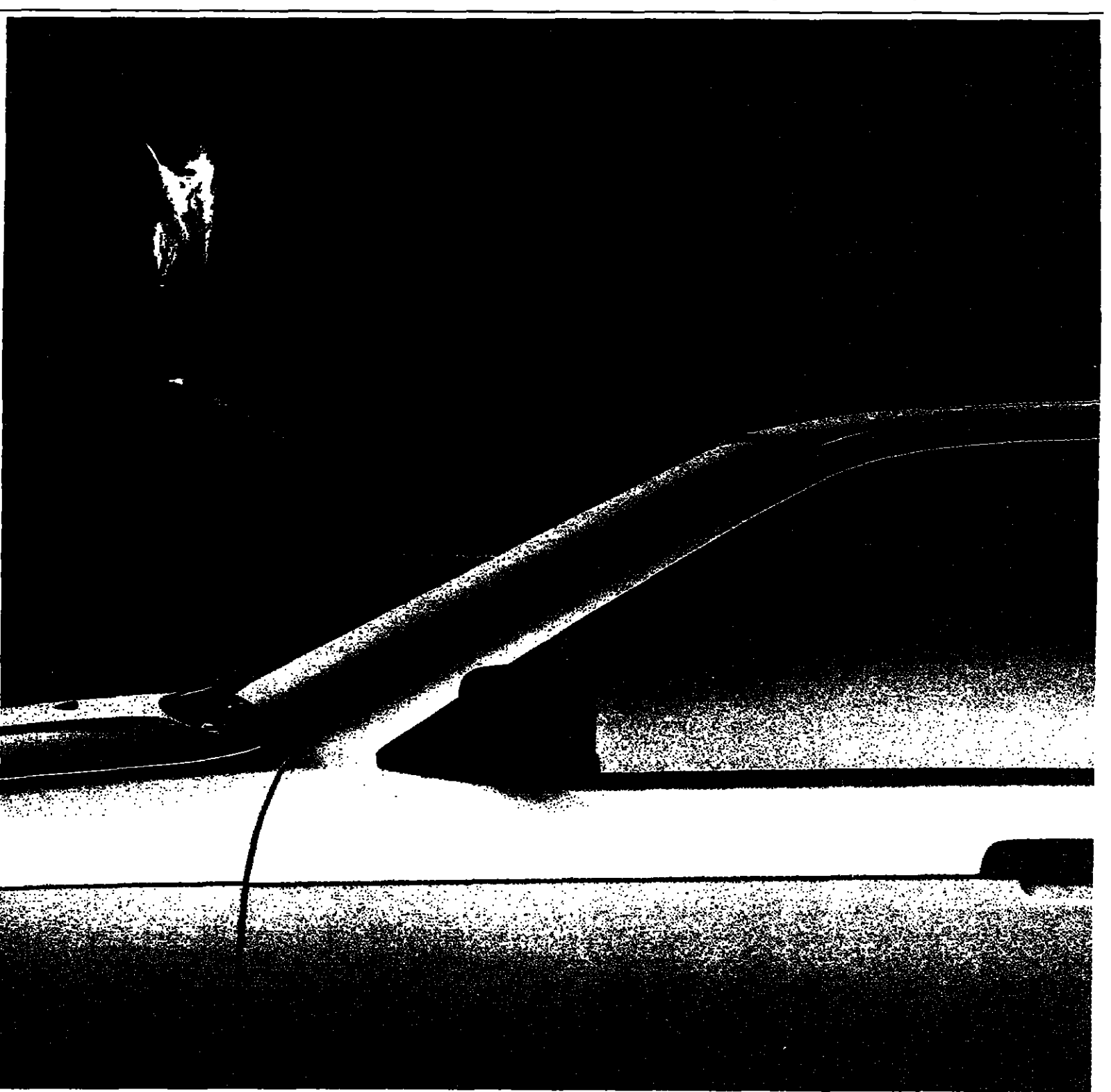
The 10,000-strong workforce will be urged from tomorrow to use other means of transport instead, including private cars.

Staff will also lose travel passes which have been issued by British Rail for years before the controversial privatisation of the industry.

The Rail Maritime and Transport Union described the cost saving measure as "bizarre" and said it will be pressing for urgent talks with the company which owns the UK's rail stations as well as tracks and signalling.

and was determined to secure a conviction. Its officers had asked the Foreign Office to persuade the Iraqi and Jordanian diplomats not to appear.

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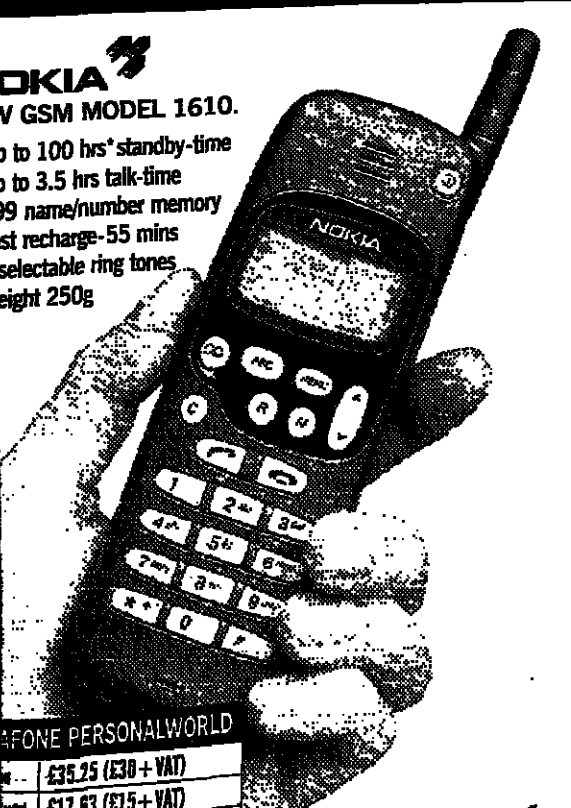
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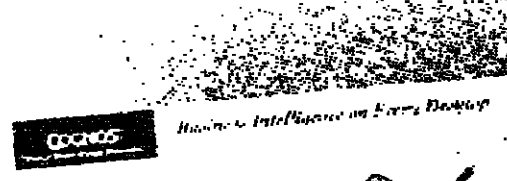
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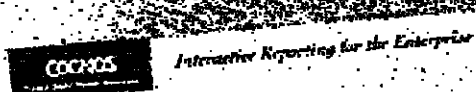
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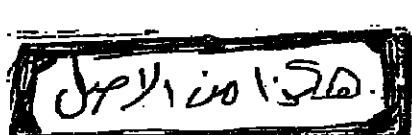
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Regulation alert: Outgoing rivers' authority chief warns that secrecy will lead to loss of public confidence in watchdog's brief

Fears for role of new environment agency

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Tipoff: A new Environment Agency comes into being with a grim warning of pitfalls from the chairman of its predecessor organisations.

The Government's free-standing agency will be one of the largest organisations of its kind in the world, employing 600 staff with a budget of just over £500m a year, much of it used from charges on industry, commerce and anglers.

Lord Crickhowell, outgoing chairman of the now-deceased National Rivers Authority (NRA), has warned ministers at the new organisation may be too secretive and that its top management are likely to be severely over-stretched.

The new agency covering England and Wales is run by a statutory board of part time non-executive directors and eight full time executives. It takes over the role, staff and funding of the NRA, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and the waste disposal regulators of more than 80 county and district councils. A similar body is being established in Scotland.

The new agency has the task of regulating polluters and waste dumpers, along with the nuclear industry, managing rivers and protecting against coastal and riverine flooding, as well as being the Government's key environmental adviser.

It will be chaired by Lord De Rumsey, a former director of the Country Landowners' Association. The chief executive is

Ed Gallagher, who held the same post at the NRA.

Lord Crickhowell said the agency must be independent of government and offer as much of its opinion as possible in public. His awkward advice comes in a "valedictory report".

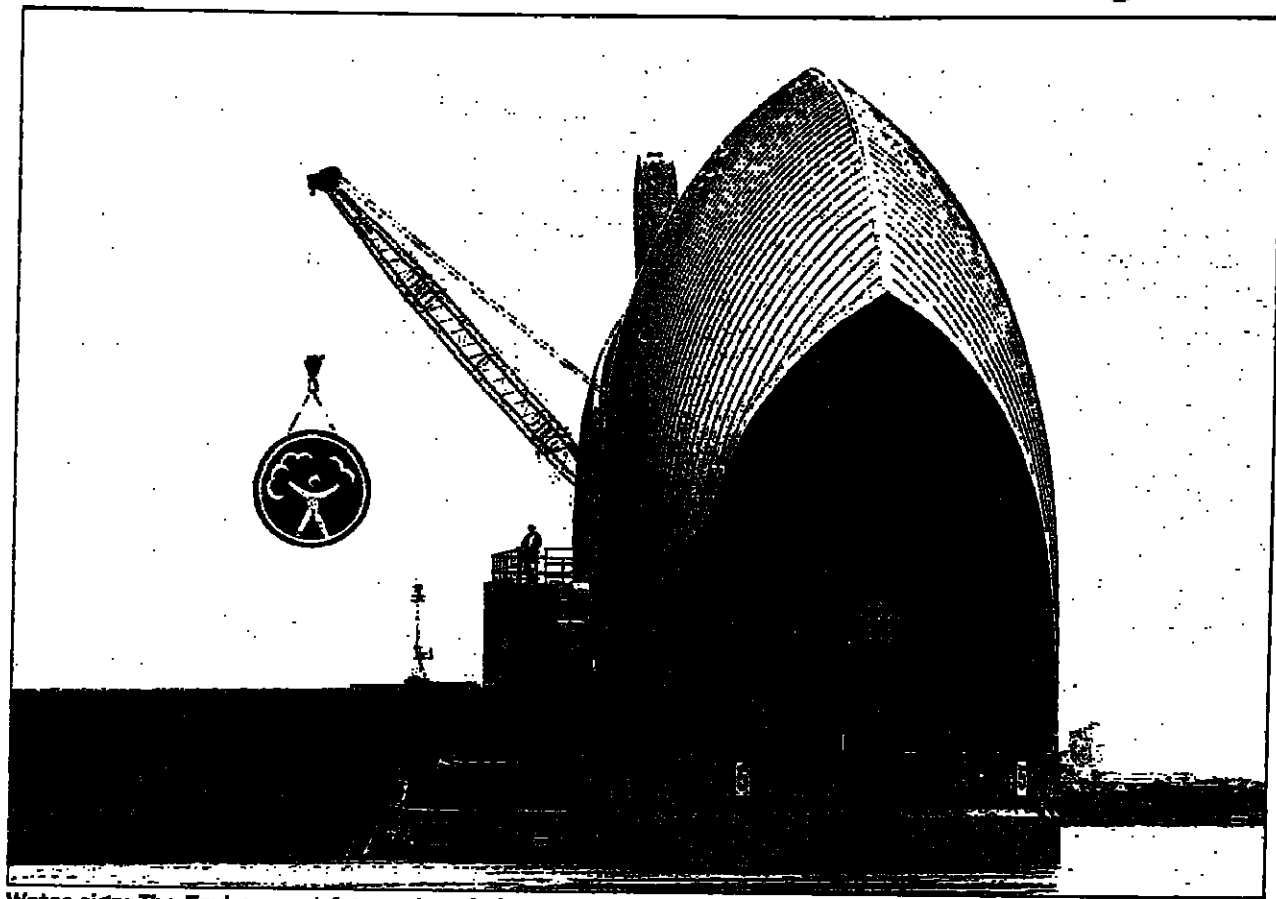
Mr Gallagher has argued that the NRA's influence with government was blunted by being too independent from Whitehall. But Lord Crickhowell said if too much of the new agency's advice was given behind the scenes it "would quickly lose the public respect and support that has been such an important part of our (the NRA's) success".

He says it is important for the agency to take a full part in the debate about the costs to industry and the public of improving the environment. The

NRA's voice had been stifled in the past because the information was "price sensitive" for water companies.

Lord Crickhowell said management needed far more freedom than the Government seemed likely to grant to set up a unified pay and benefits system for its staff. Whitehall and ministerial intervention "constituted a huge obstacle to sensible management".

He also reminds ministers that the agency's non-executive directors will have to take far more decisions on finance and policy matters than they would in a private company. "I'm not at all sure that ministers, civil servants or those invited to serve 'on the board' all fully understand the scale and seriousness of the problem that this situation creates," he writes.



Water sign: The Environment Agency logo is lowered into place at the Thames barrier Photograph: Nicholas Turpin



post: George Thompson who fears he may not work again

Factory closure leaves town to live on its pride

ERIE CLEMENT
Lair Editor

Two weeks a new brand name was launched for a product that does not exist. It is to be in a factory devoid of machinery and by a workforce that were largely unemployed.

The trademark "Marypride" is the last best hope of redundancy processing workers in isolated West Cumbrian town of Maryport.

Community leaders are looking for investors to make the brand a reality and many of the skilled food production workers are ready to invest their severance pay.

amid a national outcry, the African soup company (Campbell) announced last year that 123 employees were to be made redundant from the local homepride factory, one of three's largest employers.

Then the US multi-national bought the profitable plant in turn from British company Dalgely, employees were told that new investment was imminent and that jobs were safe.

And whether they were to be jobless, managers announced with a categorical "no". Eleven days later, in an announcement of employment of 25 percent, they announced that the factory was to close.

Plant was due to shut last Friday. But accusations that management was keen to avoid the criticism of the media, the company brought forward the closure and that their "collective and loyal" workers simply fulfilled the production quota earlier than expected.

However, within hours of the employee leaving, hired men began stripping the building of equipment, and within the bulk of the machinery disappeared down the M6. The group's plants in more remote locations like Salford and King's Lynn.

Mr Campbell-Savours, MP for Workington, has conducted a campaign against the closure. He told this week's press that he urged former owners to take industrial action against Dalgely, former owners of the factory, failing to provide adequate compensation about the sale.

Business in the area say business has already slumped. Apart from a series of "wakes" by redundant employees, pubs have seen their business decline. Since the Homepride town, around 200 redun-

dancies at other companies in West Cumbria have been announced, and the town's very survival is now in doubt.

Critics in the area say Campbell had no intention of keeping the business going. They allege the company was only interested in the Homepride brand name and in destroying the competition.

The equipment has been removed to ensure that any potential competitors would need to make a substantial investment to enter the market, say the company's former workers.

Anger over the shutdown is not confined to Cumbria. An early day motion in the Commons critical of the closure was signed by 340 MPs - one of the highest totals ever. More importantly, 48 of the signatories were Conservatives, including six former ministers.

Campbell insists that it was unaware of all the significant financial facts when it bought the factory.

In a letter to MPs, Bill Mustoe, the group's UK managing director, argued that the plant suffered from significantly higher cost than the company's four other British plants. Only a fifth of the production capacity was in use, overheads were at least 50 per cent higher than elsewhere, and the brand had lost more than a third of market share in the past four years.

Former employees argue, however, that Campbell knew all the figures before it bought it. Confidential internal figures, obtained by Mr Campbell-Savours, state that the plant was making profits of £4m on sales of £27.7m.

George Thompson, 52, a former shop steward at the factory, believes his working life is probably finished. "It's through no fault of our own," he said. "There has never been a strike here and we were making them a decent profit."

Brian Dixon, a full-time official with the GMB general union in the area, was with Mr Thompson when Campbell's managers gave assurances over the future of the plant. "I felt a deep sense of betrayal. I felt that they had raped the town. They gave me their personal assurances and I took them at face value. I told my members that they shouldn't worry and they felt a huge feeling of relief."

"In some ways I feel as though I have personally betrayed these workers. I feel sad and sickened that I have been used and misled. I've never felt like it in 19 years as a union official and I never want to feel like it again."

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Council refuses to name 'abuse victims'

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Charities who are trying to help mentally handicapped people reported to be suffering severe post traumatic stress from sexual abuse cannot find out the names of those affected because a county council is refusing to disclose information on past and present residents at two private homes.

One charitable organisation received traumatised former residents from homes in Buckinghamshire as recently as this month even though the alleged abuse ended three years ago. Buckinghamshire County Council said yesterday that the details are confidential and that local authorities and carers had been informed of the allegations individually. They have also denied allegations that they are withholding information because they are

concerned about being sued by former residents.

News of the continued effects of the abuse – described by experts as some of the worst cases of post traumatic stress they have ever seen – comes a fortnight after the death of the former manager of the homes, who is believed to have killed himself. Gordon Rowe, who set up and ran the homes in Stoke Poges, near Slough, for 10 years until 1993, was found dead in a car on 18 March, days after he learnt he was about to be charged with ill-treating residents. Thirteen people accused him of 40 assaults.

Police had investigated allegations that mentally handicapped adults were raped, beaten and humiliated. A confidential council report concluded that residents were "continually subjected to a catalogue of abuse, deprivation, humiliation and torment".

The council allowed the homes – only one of which is now operating – to remain open on the condition that new management was introduced. The operating company, Longcare Ltd, is now run by Rowe's son Nigel and a family friend, Ray Craddock, who took over in 1993.

There is no suggestion that the present management was responsible for the reported cases of abuse.

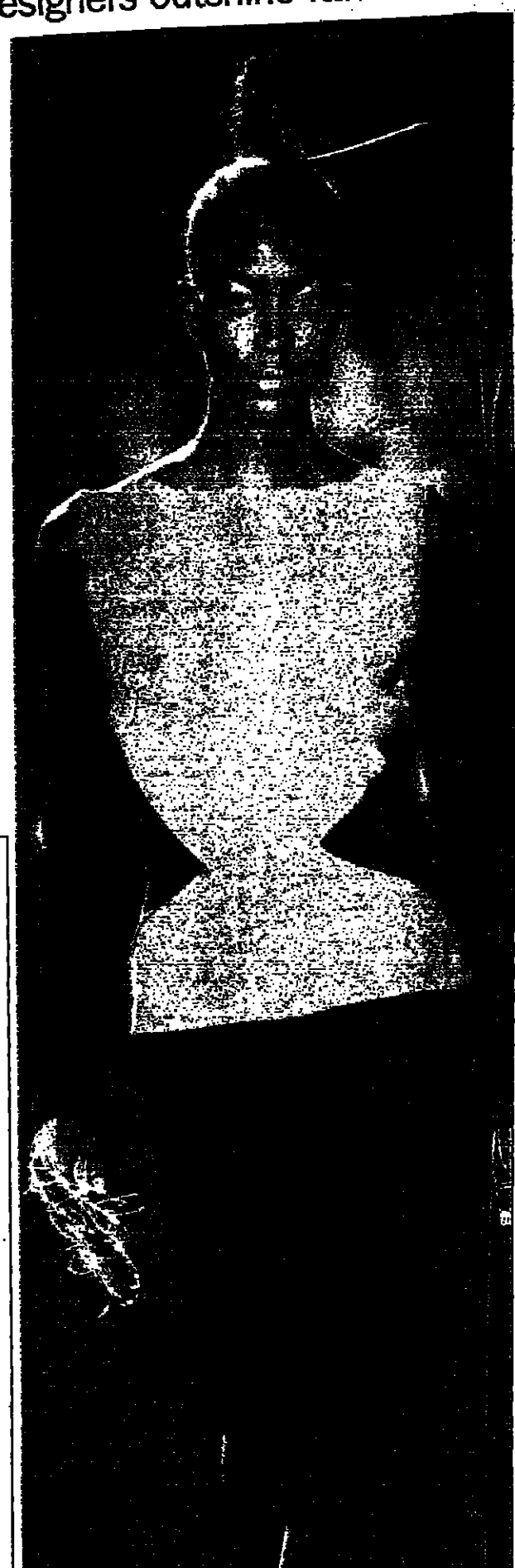
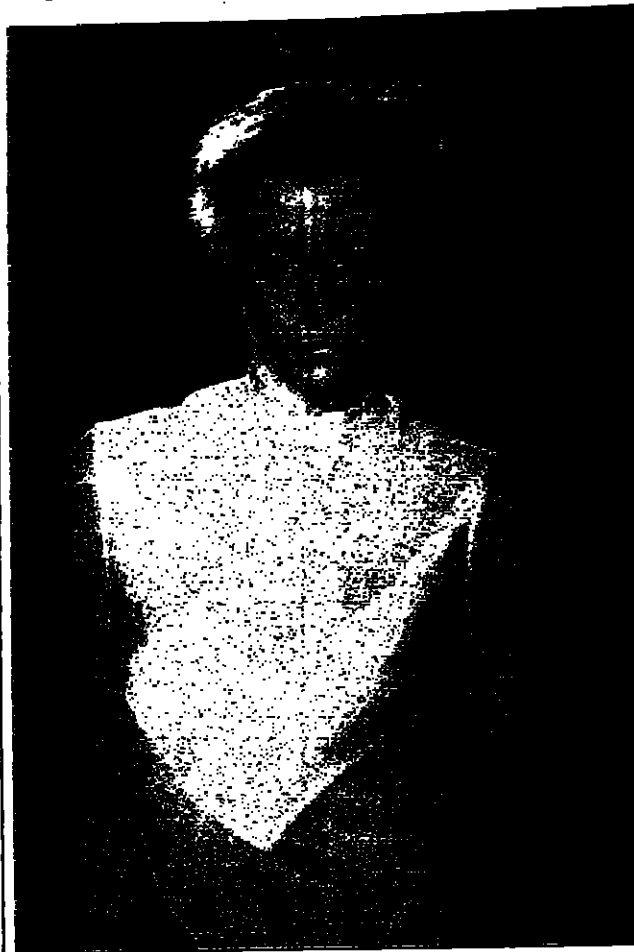
About a dozen of the pre-1993 residents, aged from their teens to mid-forties, have since been sent to Respond, a charity which provides psychotherapy to victims of sexual abuse with learning disabilities. The former residents are still suffering from a range of post-traumatic stress symptoms including self-mutilation, inappropriate sexual behaviour, smearing faeces on walls, and aggression.

A spokesman for Bucking-

ham County Council said the decision to withhold names was entirely a matter of good practice, not money. He said: "The homes are privately run. Details of residents are a matter for the placing local authorities or other relevant parties and the proprietors. It would not be proper for the county council to release information about people placed by other authorities and individuals."

Grant Wetherall, a social worker at Ealing Mencap, a charity for people with learning disabilities, which has also treated former residents suffering from trauma, added: "Buckinghamshire have allowed a home to continue to remain open when there has been horrific abuse. We believe that even though there is new management there are still residents who are suffering psychological damage from treatment under the old regime."

New York fashion: London designers outshine Italian rivals



Best of British: Evening wear designs by Ghosting modelled in New York. Photographs: Sheridan Reilly

Spectre raised of Brit invasion

TAMSI BLANCHARD
Fashion Editor

Tanya Sarne, of the British label Ghost, showed her autumn/winter '96 collection at a disused bank in New York's Union Square on Saturday night as American interest in British labels continued to rise. This is the third season she has shown in New York. Although there were other European labels showing, including the Italians Versus, Gianfranco Ferre and Miu Miu, Ms Sarne was joined by her fellow Briton, Alexander McQueen, and it was the British contingent that attracted the most attention.

There is a general excitement here about all things British, be it Blur and Pulp, designers or British models. One New York columnist could hardly contain her excitement about the prospect of interviewing Mr McQueen after the Ghost show, saying: "I worship him!"

By showing in America, designers can raise their profile and saleability. Ghost has been able to expand on an already solid US market. As one buyer from a store in Denver pointed out, Ghost is popular with American working women be-

cause it is modern and / as well as appealing to the plus woman who is bigger than size 10. And the label's success has grown at home too - try now devotes more floor space to Ghost than to almost any other designer in its store in central London.

For the new collection Ms Sarne used heavy stretchrics to make bright white ics, flared trousers and long-sleeved kaftans that looked like they were inspired by the cones from *Star Wars* and *Barbaric Galactica*. She also used crepe, fleeced fabric and quilted. For evening wear, there were bias-cut 1930s shift dresses with contrasting fabrics curving zig-zagging around the V.

Up to now, the American designers showing in New York have presented collections that are based around a silhouette - a long narrow skirt and trousers that cling and flare at the ankle. There is a little new thought or creativity involved. What Ghost does was the midway line hat clothes can have a strong identity as well as being toughly wearable without losing the momentum and creativity that drives fashion forward.

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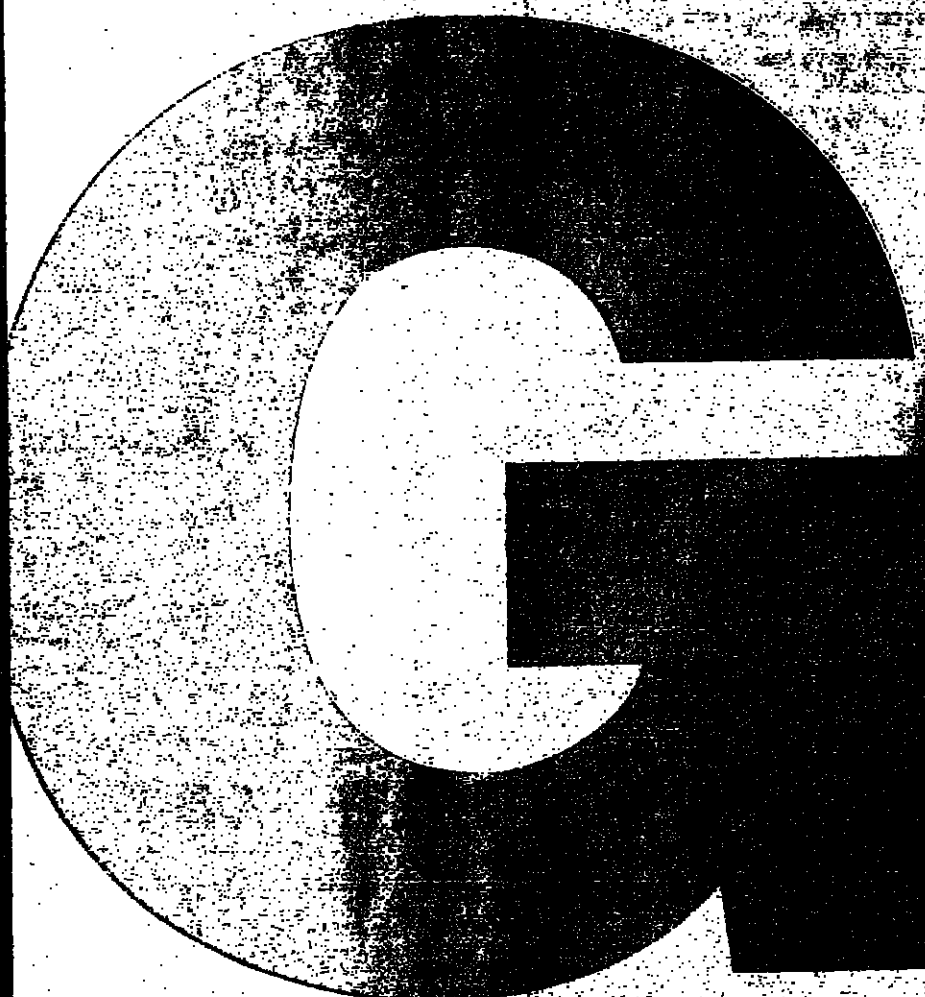
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2015/04/01

Witchdog tells drinks maker to replace 'divisive' advertisements after objections over potential harm to disfigured children

Martini beauty parade ruled 'hurtful'

MAIRIE MACDONALD
Media correspondent

Thanks maker Martini was told today that its advertisement featuring ugly people who supposedly had to have cosmetic surgery to make the beautiful enough to drink the alcohol were offensive to disfigured children.

A ruling from the Independent Television Commission followed 70 complaints from viewers, including a plastic surgeon, who argued that the advertisements on the life of "beautiful people" were offensive.

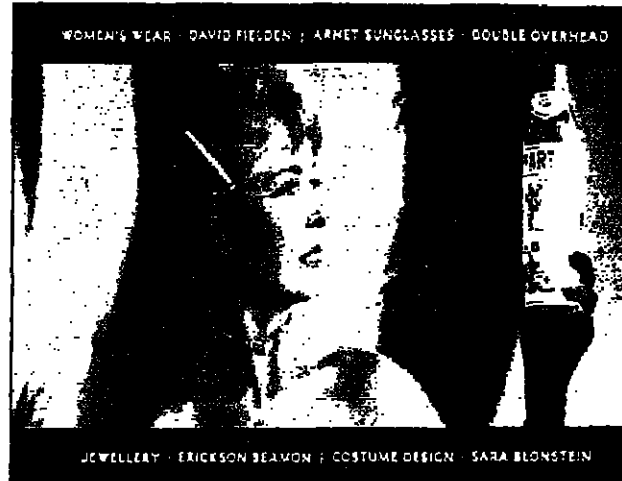
The first showed a young man dressed to drink Martini. He felt he was too ugly. After undergoing cosmetic surgery, he could confidently drink.

The second featured a quiz. A New Face, in which winners were given cosmetic surgery "so they look good enough to drink the beautiful".

Both commercials ended with the slogan: "With Martini, we can make Britain a more beautiful place."



In your face: Scenes from the advertisements, which feature ugly people supposedly given cosmetic surgery to make them 'beautiful enough' to drink Martini



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But the complainants - who also included a neurophysiologist and two charities - objected to the emphasis on corrective surgery as hurtful to people with facial disfigurements.

Some expressed particular concern about the effect on facially disfigured children, and

a number said that it was divisive to imply that only beautiful people could drink Martini.

The advertising agency involved, Howell Henry Chalcott Lury, said that the advert was intended to satirise vanity and to ridicule people who strived for physical perfection by the use of surgery.

No one in the commercials

was disfigured and the quiz show contestants were of normal people of average appearance.

In its ruling the ITC said that, while recognising many viewers might dislike the advert, it would be "excessive" to conclude that the humour went beyond acceptable standards.

However, the heavy emphasis

on cosmetic surgery was upsetting some sections of the audience. It was particularly concerned about "possible impact on facially disfigured children who would not necessarily have the maturity to interpret the material in the relatively sophisticated way intended".

It has forbidden Martini to run the adverts before the 9pm watershed and has "urged" the drinks maker to replace the campaign as soon as possible with more sensitive material.

The telephone services either

suggested "lucky" or "unlucky" numbers or claimed a mathematical basis for increasing the chances of a win.

The ITC ruled that no number was statistically more likely to come up than another. It did not accept Teletext's argument that putting the suggestions in an astrological context made them acceptable.

The research is being supported by the North East England Pigeon Fanciers association. A spokesman said: "Pigeon racing is an obsessional hobby and it is something of a personal disaster when a fancier has to give up because of this condition. Anything that can help detect this disease in its early stages is most welcome."

Help for pigeon fanciers

A investigation has begun into pigeon fancier's lung - a severely debilitating condition that affects one in 10 aficionados.

The medical school at Newcastle upon Tyne university hopes to improve the diagnosis of the condition, a type of allergy to dust in the lofts housing the birds, and possibly to identify enthusiasts who are vulnerable. Dr Chris Baldwin of the university's immunology department, said: "We have identified a particular type of antibody that is much more likely to occur in those people who have the disease ... The team is now investigating why some people make this type of antibody while others don't."

The research is being supported by the North East England Pigeon Fanciers association. A spokesman said: "Pigeon racing is an obsessional hobby and it is something of a personal disaster when a fancier has to give up because of this condition. Anything that can help detect this disease in its early stages is most welcome."

Hospitals face budget cuts in switch to GPs

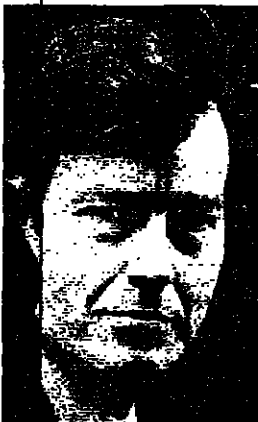
CH BROWN
Political Correspondent

Local budgets could be cut to fund more operations performed in local surgeries in play which could change the face of family doctor services.

The transfer of resources from hospitals to GPs has emerged as one of the leading demands from family doctors in a "tuning exercise" being coded by Gerry Malone, the health minister, to pave the way for changes.

Ever, there could be a roving the loss of funds by hosts, as the resources are gradually switched to GPs.

Malone has also heard daily GPs that hospitals are also overcharging GPs for services the "internal market".



Stephen Dorrell: Wants to end fundholding

to compensate for the loss of resources to GPs.

Proposals will be put forward in a Green Paper expected in May. Stephen Dorrell, the secretary of State for Health, believes GP fundholding improved so successful that the benefits should be built on.

All of fundholders published today shows that 40 per cent complained about the charges being increased after the budgets were set.

Dorrell is studying an expansion of "total fundholding".

from a few pilot schemes, under which GPs would control the whole of the budget for their patients, including resources which normally go to hospitals.

Many GPs are reluctant to take on extra work, because they feel they are overloaded.

The Government is preparing to offer GPs more money after the general election. As private contractors to the NHS, they are seen by Tory strategists as important opinion formers.

The expansion of primary care is also being used by the Tories to put pressure on Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokeswoman, over her party's plans to replace fundholding with joint commissioning.

The National Association of Fundholding Practices issued a poll to coincide with the launch of another wave of fundholding practices today taking the total to 13,000. The poll was used to show that fundholders would not want to be replaced by joint commissioning - in which all GPs co-operate to "buy" services from hospitals.

GPs could be given the funds, now given to hospitals, for routine operations, such as bone setting. That could relieve the pressure on accident and emergency units, but it could lead to more mergers, or closures.

The Prime Minister signalled the changes could go further by allowing GPs to take over cottage hospitals. The aim is to create "hospitals without walls" in the community, in which operations can be carried out to avoid patients spending long terms in general hospitals.

The British Medical Association, meanwhile, is concerned that the drive by ministers to expand the role of GPs will undermine their commitment to generalised provision of service.

The National Asthma Campaign has called for an overhaul of the discount system for prescriptions after warning that many who suffer from the condition cannot afford the new prescription charge of £5.50 per item.

Gravity device probes universe

Scientists have begun with one of the most sensitive instruments ever built to stretch its legs on a mission to another solar system.

German colleagues there building the giant stare at a fruit farm near Elber and in 1999 it will be giving into the mysteries of the universe. The structure will be "gravitational waves",

which were predicted by Einstein but whose existence could now only be suspected as they could measure them.

Gravitational waves are faint ripples of space-time, reaching earth millions of years after events like exploding stars or the appearance of black holes. The structure that will measure them is formed from two 100m steel tubular arms, 100 metres long and set at angles to each other. Each contains an almost perfect vacuum, in which the most perfect mirrors will be laser light up and down the length of the tubes.

Glasgow University's department of physics and astronomy, said the arrival of a gravitational wave should alter the length of each tube by a fraction of the diameter of the nucleus of a single atom. This will be measured with the latest laser and optics technology, using techniques pioneered in Glasgow, where a prototype was built.

The University of Wales in Cardiff will be involved in analysing the data. The British team will also be working with German colleagues from the University of Hanover, the Albert Einstein Institute in Potsdam and the Max Planck Institute at Garching.

Britain's contribution to the £7m project includes a £1m grant from the government-funded Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council.

Four more structures are to be built, including an American one which will have arms 4km long, but the Hanover device - so sensitive that it should be able to detect waves from 45 million light years away - will be the first in operation.



RIGHT



LEFT

At last, the left-handed Mars bar.

You spoke and we listened.

A sizeable part of our bulging mailbag at Mars has recently complained about the 'TEAR HERE' perforation being at the wrong end of the Mars bar for our valued left-handed customers.

Many are opening the bar at the wrong end and

eating the Mars bar against the chocolate flow on the bar surface. And this, naturally enough, can impair that unique and delicious Mars taste.

So we did something about it.

From today, all Mars bar wrappers will now feature either the handy, at-a-glance symbol ® for

right-handed bars (see diagram), or the symbol ① for left-handed bars.

It's a small service to our customers but in this fast moving, faceless world of ours, isn't it nice to know that someone's lending a hand?

A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play.

© REGISTERED TRADEMARK. © MARS 1996

news



Lending a hand: Dogs and their handlers from the Highland branch of the Search and Rescue Dog Association on an annual assessment weekend in the Scottish Highlands. The trials involved pyrotechnics and snow burials
Photograph: Tom Kidd

Sheep in Wales still affected by Chernobyl

ROGER DOBSON
and JOJO MOYES

Hundreds of Welsh sheep are still failing radioactivity tests a decade after the Chernobyl disaster, it emerged yesterday, following claims that the nuclear accident in the former Soviet Union may also be responsible for a sharp rise in cancers on a Scottish island.

Ten years on from the Ukrainian nuclear power station disaster, sheep on more than 200 square miles of north Wales and 13 farms in Cumbria are still subject to controls and testing which were originally expected only to last a matter of months.

Around 400 farms with 220,000 sheep are subject to

controls introduced in June 1986. Latest figures show that 672 sheep failed the monitoring test and that the highest radioactivity level is still over half the peak of 1987.

Monitoring is compulsory for all animals leaving the restricted areas and sheep which leave after failing a test are marked with apricot, green or blue paint. Radioactivity levels fall when the sheep leave the restricted area and buyers of marked sheep can have them re-monitored.

Huw Jones, of the Farmers' Union of Wales, said: "The controls were really not expected to last so long, just a very short time. But they have continued and farmers have got used to them. They get £1.30 compensation for each scan carried out, and they have learned to live with it."

He added: "There is no doubt that the controls helped to protect Welsh lamb against big losses in sales and people do have confidence in lamb. Some sheep are still failing the test, but it is a relatively small number."

At the peak in 1987, nearly 23,000 sheep in Wales failed the radioactivity test.

The news came as doctors on Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides called for an urgent investigation into why the number of cancers there has tripled in the last 18 months. They believe

the sharp increase may be the result of the island's population eating vegetables, seal and meat contaminated fallout.

The cancers being arted are largely of the digestive tract, with some lung tumours.

The Western Isles Health Board has said it will investigate the rise in cases, and the government yesterday offered support any inquiry. Bicoland's chief medical officer, Dr Robert Kendell, said was "exceedingly unlikely that Chernobyl was responsible" he cited the following reasons:

■ The radioactive plume from Chernobyl spread over tens of square miles, and regardless of local rainfall differences, it could never have "selectively contaminated" so small an area so far away.

■ Radioactive fallout, not cause cancers of the digestive tract in isolation. It only caused thyroid cancer and leukaemias.

■ As Chernobyl happened in 1986, cancers related could be spread over many years, as happened with thyroid cancers in the Ukraine.

The explosion at Chernobyl happened on 26 April 1986 and released 150 million curies of radioactivity. The radioactive cloud passed over parts of Britain just over a week later.

Crossbill faces unique tests

ROS WYNNE-JONES

The Scottish crossbill, at present undergoing genetic testing to determine whether it is a separate species, may be the only bird unique to British shores.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is funding DNA testing to clear up doubts over the bird's taxonomic status. If it turns out to be a different species to the common crossbill then it is the UK's only endemic species.

Like the common crossbill, the Scottish bird takes its name from its unusual beak, which is specially developed to extract seeds from pine cones in its coniferous habitat.

Only fragments of the ancient Caledonian pine forests remain and the Scottish crossbill appears to be dwindling with them, which is why it appears on a list of 116 endangered animal and plant species which are having rescue plans designed for them. There are estimated to be only 1,500 adults in Britain.

The plans are being drawn up

Heritage of the wild

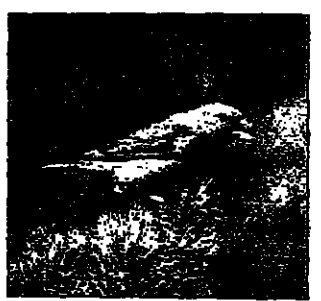
by the biodiversity steering group, a committee of government scientists, ecologists, wildlife conservation charities and civil servants.

"We don't know what the Scottish crossbill's taxonomic status yet, but in the meantime we are giving the bird the benefit of the doubt," a spokesman for the RSPB said.

The crossbill family have large heads because muscles that power the strong jaws, and the Scottish crossbill has even been known to use its beak to swing tree trunks. While the common crossbill is smaller, RSPB spokesman said, "Scottish crossbills are amazingly... They are acrobatic feeders they occasionally do a tze job, using their beaks."

The red grouse was considered a species due to Britain, but it has been found to be a sub-species of the willow grouse found in Scandinavia. "The Scottish crossbill is our last hope for a lot of our own," the RSPB said.

The steering group proposing to promote the protection, creation and management of native pinewoods and other sites frequented by Scottish crossbills, while the two clarify the taxonomic status of the bird continues.



Scottish crossbill: At risk

DAILY POEM

Midshipman

By Gary Geddes

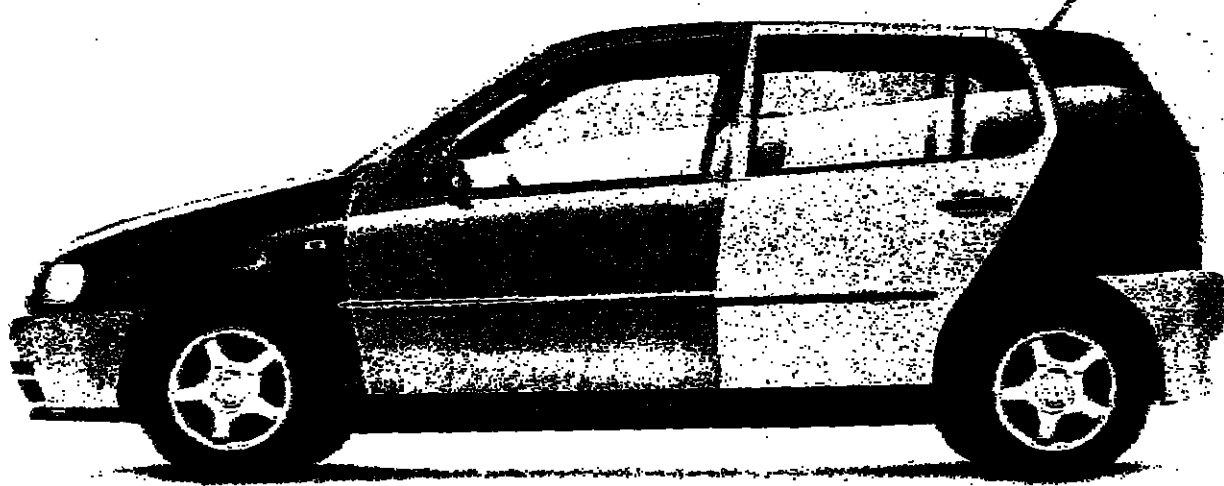
*She had a small anchor,
not much larger than a wasp,
tattooed on her wrist before I left
on the first troop ship.*

*I was in the crow's nest
with a bosun's pipe
when we hoisted the aftersheets.
I could see her on the rocks
of the Eggerton Head promontory
waving, holding up her anchor,
and listening for the three short blasts
I'd promised to make.*

*I suppose we were lovers,
though without the usual
haste and burning.
I'd touch her naked breasts
and she was not ashamed
to admit her curiosity.
We talked, collected shells
at Eggerton Head, and thought
an earlobe worth an afternoon.*

*Drowning wasn't half so bad
and I carried that tiny anchor
with me to my grave.*

Gary Geddes is one of Canada's best-known poets. His poetic interests include the archaeological: his sequence *Terracotta Army* - a series of dramatic monologues in the imagined speakers are clay soldiers from China of 6th century BC, published in 1984 - won the Commonwealth Poetry Competition. It appears with this poem, the eighth in a sequence called *Girl by the Water in Active Trading: Sed Poems 1970-1993* published this month by Peterloo Po



No, honestly.

We aren't trying to make a fool of you. This isn't a product of our imagination, it's a product of the Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg.

The Harlequin, as it's called, started life as a car show gimmick to indicate the colours available.

Of course, the orders flooded in.

We dutifully started producing the multi-

coloured mavericks, each with a colourful array of features.

Among them, a driver's airbag, engine immobiliser, height-adjustable steering column and electric, heated door mirrors.

Since bowing to public pressure, however, we haven't had a moment's peace.

You demanded a Polo with a bigger sunroof. You got the 'Open Air'.

You insisted on a boat. You're getting the Polo Saloon.

So please, we've done everything you asked of us, now give us a break.

There are thirty-eight different models in a range starting at £7,760. One of them must be right.

We've even made one that runs on rabbit droppings.



The Polo Harlequin.



See hand: The Fabergé clock given to Alexander III being auctioned by Christie's

Fabergé face worth a fortune

MAINE MACDONALD
Art correspondent

These few clocks in the world can be expected to sell for a fortune. This is one of them. Christie's is to auction it later this month. The extraordinary piece, wrought in silver by Carl Fabergé, was given to Alexander III of Russia in 1891 to commemorate his 25th wedding anniversary to the Empress Maria Feodorovna, and the 10th anniversary of their coronation.

members of the imperial family and is Fabergé's most important silver commission – and one of the largest of his works of art – which remains in existence. Standing 27in high, the clock is shaped in the form of a baroque monument. Its base features a Romanov griffin holding the imperial Russian arms in his right talons and the royal arms of Denmark – the home country of the empress – in its left. Around the diamond-studded clock face swarm 25 figures, one for each year of the marriage.

and the piece is unmounted by a triple-crowned Russian imperial double-headed eagle holding a laurel wreath. Fabergé is known to have employed several outsiders to create the work. A court architect called Benois did the design, and the sculptor Aubert made a wax model. The total cost was 18,585 roubles – an immense fortune at the time. But it should set for another on 18 April, when it will be the star lot in a sale of Russian works of art, paintings and Fabergé at Christie's New York.

Classroom unions: Conference season opens with members calling for action against attacks on profession

National Union of Teachers
Membership: 189,293
Who they are: Teachers and some heads, mainly from primary schools. More left-wingers than other unions.
Key issues: Angry about league tables; furious about the naming of weak teachers by inspectors.
Militancy: Most militants are in the NUT but its leadership is trying to calm them. Conference will hear numerous calls for industrial action, not least over testing.

National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
Membership: 146,266
Who they are: Classroom teachers. The union claims to recruit more than half of all newly qualified teachers.
Key issues: Pay and conditions, violence against teachers, inspections.
Militancy: Not afraid to take action. Won a spectacular court victory during the 1993 boycott of testing, which led to a climb-down by the Government.

Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Membership: 140,616
Who they are: Membership comes largely from secondary schools and independent schools and from further education.
Key issues: Disruptive pupils, school inspections, testing and the national curriculum.
Militancy: Increasing. Traditionally moderate, the association's conference will discuss affiliation to the Trades Union Congress.

Professional Association of Teachers
Membership: 40,036
Who they are: Many are former members of National Union of Teachers and National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers who defected during the strikes of the Eighties.
Key issues: Negative effects of television and video games, nursery education – has special section for nursery nurses.
Militancy: Non-striking union established by two teachers who were angered by the effects of industrial action.

National Association of Head Teachers
Membership: 32,000
Who they are: About two-thirds are primary heads and deputies, the rest are secondary, nursery and special schools.
Key issues: Funding, testing – particularly of 11-year-olds – and nursery vouchers.
Militancy: Increasing. Headteachers may refuse to take action against staff who boycott tests for 11-year-olds.

Secondary Heads Association
Membership: 8,650
Who they are: Heads and deputies at secondaries.
Key issues: Role of local authorities, funding, 16-19 review by Ron Dearing, government's chief adviser on the national curriculum.
Militancy: Almost none. Only known incidence was a half-day strike in Manchester more than a decade ago in support of a victimised colleague.



Doug McAvoy, general secretary



Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary



Peter Smith, general secretary



John Andrews, general secretary



David Hart, general secretary



John Sutton, general secretary

Angry teachers threaten to boycott inspections

JUDITH JUDD and
FRAN ABRAMS

Teacher unions will call for non-co-operation with school inspections at their Easter conferences, which start today. The move could mean staff refusing to talk to inspectors or to teach while they are in the classroom.

Angered by what they see as increasingly political statements by Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector of schools, and by the Prime Minister's decision that bad teachers should be named, union members will also call for the abolition of the inspection service.

All the three main classroom unions will meet in the next fortnight amid fears of a repetition of last year's conference season, when Labour's education spokesman, David Blunkett,

was besieged by militant members of the National Union of Teachers. Gillian Shephard will speak at the conferences, the first Secretary of State to visit the National Union of Teachers' gathering for 16 years.

The Secondary Heads' Association meets at the end of April and the National Association of Head Teachers at the end of May.

All the classroom unions say that their members are furious about punitive new inspections set up by the Government. From next Monday, inspectors will mark all teachers on a scale of one to seven and report those scoring six and seven to their headteachers.

The two biggest unions, the NUT and the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS-UWT), will both hear calls for

members to break the law by refusing to work with the schools inspectors.

Doug McAvoy, the NUT's general secretary, said: "There will be support for non-co-operation with inspections. You can't expect teachers not to be angry about them and the way in which the chief inspector has gone out of his way to promote attacks on teachers."

At the Association of Teachers and Lecturers' conference, which begins today in Torquay, Devon, there will be condemnation of the chief inspector and calls for the inspection body, Ofsted, to be scrapped.

The NUT conference will also debate a motion to ballot primary-school teachers on a test boycott which could bring disruption to classrooms during next term's national tests for 600,000 11-year-olds. Mrs Shep-

hard announced the new league tables last month, only days after saying that there would be no tables for 11-year-olds this year.

Mr McAvoy said: "There will be a lot of support for boycotting the 11-year-old tests in protest against league tables. We should have to ponder what support might be forthcoming for a boycott beyond the floor of the conference."

Violence against teachers and false allegations of abuse by pupils will also be high on the agenda. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers will publish a survey of 71 local authorities showing increasing discipline problems.

In the wake of the massacre at the primary school in Dunblane last month it will call for new laws to ensure that schools invest in surveil-

lance systems to protect against intruders.

ATL members will also call for ministers to introduce new investigative procedures to protect teachers against malicious allegations of abuse by pupils. Teachers say that these accusations, often perpetrated by pupils who have been disciplined for a misdemeanour, are becoming increasingly common.

At the NASUWT conference, delegates will call for the disciplining of parents who encourage disruptive children to misbehave. Nigel de Gruchy, the union's general secretary, said that he would rather see children on the streets stealing cars than in school disrupting lessons.

"It is better to wreck a car than to wreck a class if that's the choice," he said.

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Oscar, Oscar, Bravo!

The two Oscars won by BBC Television programmes on March 25 represent the highest possible international recognition for excellence.

We're proud to be associated with such talents as Nick Park – creator of Wallace and Gromit – and documentary maker Jon Blair. And to celebrate their achievements, BBC viewers can see both these Academy Award-winning films again this weekend.

A Close Shave: BBC1 Good Friday at 6.40pm.
Best Animated Short Film: An Aardman Animations production in association with BBC Bristol and BBC Children's International.

Anne Frank Remembered: BBC2 Easter Monday at 7.00pm.
Best Documentary Feature: A Jon Blair Film in association with BBC Television and the Disney Channel.

BBC

TELEVISION AT ITS BEST

international

Chechen peace bid: Kremlin offers to stop combat operations, pull out troops and talk with separatist leader

Yeltsin makes TV pledge to end bloodshed

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin appeared on national television last night to reveal a plan for ending the war in Chechnya, which he has admitted is likely to make or break his chances of being re-elected as Russian President in June. The plan promised a halt to combat operations in the Caucasian region and the partial withdrawal of troops. It also held out the possibility of indirect talks with the Chechen separatist leader, General Dzhokhar Dudayev.

It remains to be seen how effective the plan will be, given that Moscow's forces were bombing Chechen villages up to the last minute before Mr Yeltsin spoke, and in view of the fact that no consultations were held with General Dudayev, who still considers that he is at war with Russia.

The commander of Russian forces in Chechnya, General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, said after the broadcast that he hoped Russians understood it would be impossible to end all fighting immediately.

Mr Yeltsin admitted that "the Chechen crisis is Russia's biggest problem". To solve it, he had ordered an end to combat operations from 31 March and "a stage-by-stage withdrawal of federal forces from the quiet regions of Chechnya to its administrative borders."

"The military actions have helped create the necessary preconditions for a radical change in the situation," he said, in reference to the Russian military campaign.

Last week, the Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev, said that over 100 Chechen villages had become "islands of peace"

after they handed over their weapons to the Russian army, in exchange for security guarantees. Western reporters said the peace deals were often reached under duress.

Mr Yeltsin said efforts to "extend zones of conciliation" would continue, but added: "Of course, we will not tolerate terrorist actions. Responses to them will be adequate."

General Dudayev's Muslim fighters have been mostly pushed back into the southern mountains as a result of Russia's military offensive. The Kremlin incumbent must hope that none of them re-emerges to stage embarrassing pre-election raids of the kind that were made over the last year on hospitals in southern Russia.

President Yeltsin acknowledged military measures would not achieve a settlement of the Chechen conflict. "That is why the second task is to prepare and stage free democratic elections to a republican legislature," he said.

The Chechens have a bitter experience of "free" elections organised by Russian. Last December they were offered only one candidate, Doku Zavgayev, in a poll for a regional leader that was reminiscent of Brezhnev-era "democracy".

This time, President Yeltsin envisages a "political peace forum" composed of representatives from Chechen regions will help prepare the elections.

"The election of a new parliament will become a major step in recreating the bodies of state power in the Chechen republic," Mr Yeltsin said.

"As the system of power in Chechnya strengthens, responsibility and authority to finalise a settlement will shift from the government of the Russian

Federation to the head, government and parliament of the Chechen republic."

Then the "main stumbling block - the peculiarities of the status of the Chechen republic" could be addressed, he said.

The Chechen separatists insist on full independence. Russia has offered autonomy, while insisting Chechnya must remain a part of the Russian Federation.

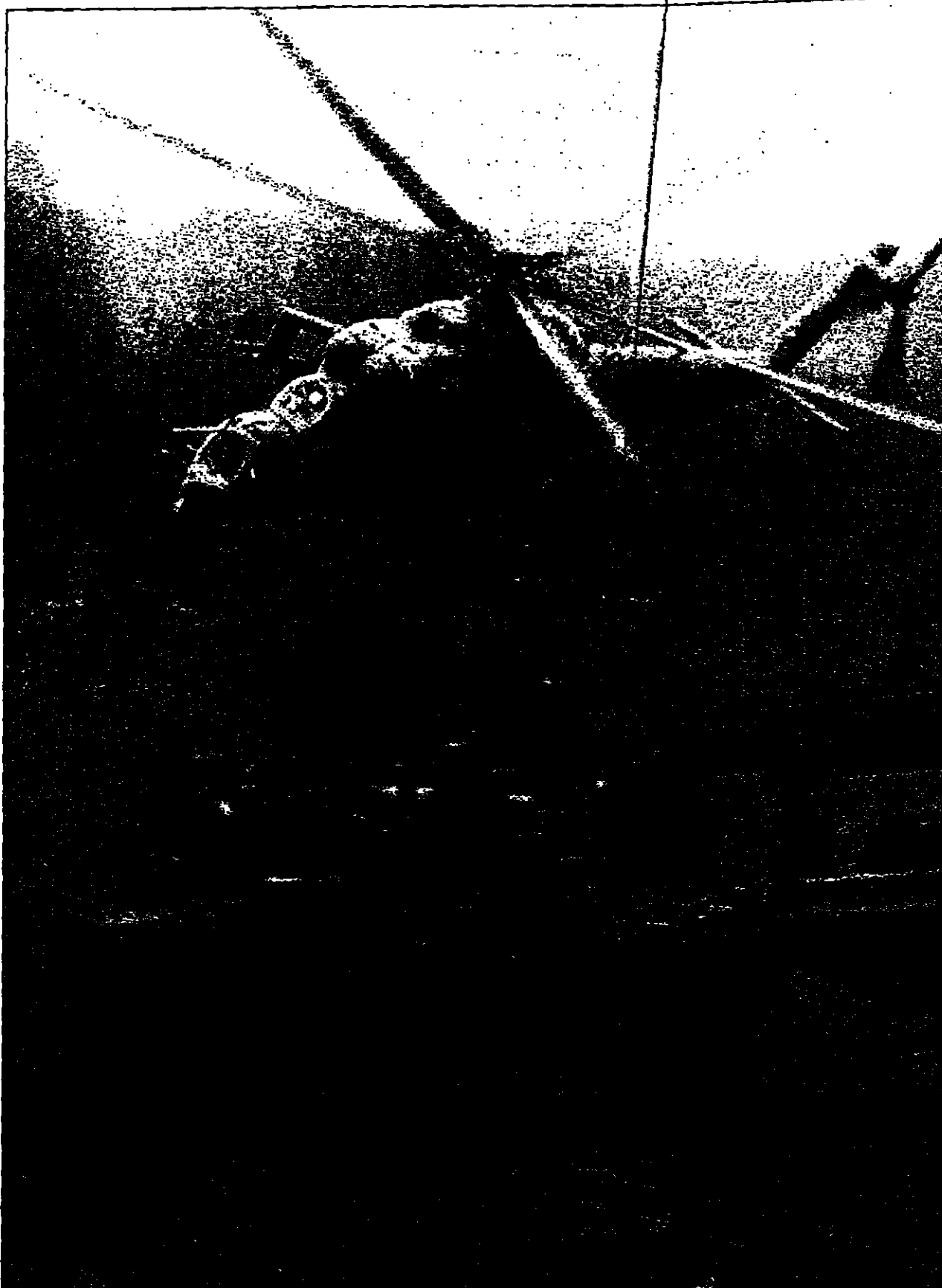
Nothing Mr Yeltsin said last night suggested Moscow had changed its position on independence. All Mr Yeltsin said was: "The main condition under which negotiations on the status of Chechnya could be started is normalising the situation in the republic and establishing peace, calm and stability there. For the sake of that we are ready to enter into negotiations, through intermediaries, with Dudayev's side."

He appointed the Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, a dove on the Chechen issue, to form a state commission for a settlement in the region.

Peace talks between envoys from Moscow and representatives of General Dudayev last summer produced a ceasefire. But it was violated on both sides as talks on a settlement ran into difficulties, until full-scale war broke out again last autumn.

Mr Yeltsin said he would ask the state Duma to consider an amnesty for Chechen fighters "except those who have committed grave common law crimes", presumably meaning those who took civilian hostages in the raids on southern Russian hospitals. He promised that humanitarian aid and government funds for reconstruction would be better distributed.

"Today they often never reach those who need them most."



Iron fist: Russian forces were bombing Chechen villages up to the last minute

Photograph: Mindaugas Kulbis/AP

Bulgaria
tormy
row ver
Krenin
allianceADRIAN BRIDGE
Central Europe Correspondent

Russia's drive to restore its influence in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has sparked a furor in Bulgaria, traditionally one of Moscow's staunchest allies.

In an outburst one week-end, the Bulgarian president, Zhelev Zhelev, said the country's Socialist government could be holding its talks with Russia, aimed at bringing it back into a Moscow pact.

Mr Zhelev's comments were precipitated by the signing on Friday of an accords strengthening ties between the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. According to Bulgarian media reports, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, declared after the signing: "The new community open to other states... may be Baltic states or perhaps, for example, Bulgaria."

Mr Zhelev said Yeltsin's idea "has never been considered by official Bulgarian state institutions and never been accepted by the Bulgarian people". At the same time, he suggested Bulgaria's government, made up of former communists, could already be in cahoots with the KGB.

"I am officialising the government if any destiny talks have been held with Russia, and if any made commitments be the backs of the Bulgarian people," said the President.

As a former left and virulent anti-Communist, Mr Zhelev represents the Western camp in Bulgaria, which sees the long-term goal of the country as membership of the European Union.

Although the government publicly backs a pro-Western stance, Socialist MPs are more pro-Russian and are wary of pre-Nato membership in face of Moscow's objection.

Within the former Communist bloc, Bulgaria always considered Moscow its most loyal ally. In addition to cultural and linguistic ties, the country remained dependent on Russia for its supplies.

With little prospect of early entry to Nato or EU, Bulgaria is coming under pressure from Russia to what it hopes will evolve into a counterweight to the Western-based forces. The pact signed by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan foresees economic ties and integration.

Human rights group attacks army's excessive use of force

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, the New York-based human rights monitoring group, has accused the Russian armed forces of disregarding the safety of civilians in waging their war against separatist fighters in Chechnya. However, in a report based on a fact-finding mission

to the region last January, the group also charged the Chechen rebels with violating international humanitarian law by taking civilians hostage and using them as human shields.

"As has been the case throughout this war, the Russian army continues to show total disregard for the safety of the civilian population," the group said. "The shelling of the village

of Pervomayskoye in January 1996 is only one of the most recent, dramatic examples of the Russian army's systematic violation of humanitarian law during its war in Chechnya."

Russian forces destroyed Pervomayskoye, a village in the republic of Dagestan, after trapping a group of rebels there with about 160 hostages, mostly from the nearby town of Kizlyar. The Human Rights

Watch report quoted the imam of the local mosque, Magomet Aliyev, as saying the rebels had not killed any villagers.

It added: "Beginning on 15 January, Russian forces pounded Pervomayskoye with artillery and helicopter-launched shelling for three days and destroyed the village entirely. It appears that this disproportionate use of force cost the lives of about 16 hostages whom Chechen rebels had scattered in houses throughout the village."

Representatives from Human Rights Watch who visited Pervomayskoye on 23 January concluded that 10 per cent of all homes had been razed, 45 per cent had been rendered uninhabitable and 40 per cent had suffered significant damage.

However, while criticising the Russian army for excessive use of force, the report accused the Chechen rebels in Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye of committing summary executions, using a hospital and apartment buildings for military purposes, and holding civilians as human shields.

The report also discussed the fighting last December in Gudermes, Chechnya's second

biggest city, where the rebels launched an assault against Russian forces who had taken control in March 1995. Criticising the scale of Russian retaliation, the report said: "The use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force in Gudermes, the village of Shelkovskaya and other villages nearby resulted in massive destruction and the loss of untold lives."

Slovaks protest as their freedoms are whittled away

New anti-subversion law confirms fears of drift towards totalitarianism, writes Adrian Bridge

Bratislava—Fr Marian Dragun squinted in the sun and delivered his damning verdict on life in Slovakia, just over three years after it struck out on its own as an independent country. "As a priest under Communism, I know what tools can be used to prevent people speaking the truth, I saw them applied then, and I see them again now."

He quickly qualified his statement. Had this been 1988, we would not have been having this conversation in broad daylight, in the middle of one of Bratislava's busiest squares.

We were not talking of true totalitarianism. The country still enjoys free elections and an independent judiciary. Although the television and radio are all pro-government, most newspapers are firmly in the hands of the opposition.

But like many Slovaks, Fr Dragun still felt uneasy. "We are freer than we were under the Communists, but there are worrying signals. In the Church we are again coming under pressure to be obedient."

The Catholic Church is not alone in feeling a chill wind in Slovakia since the return to power in late 1994 of Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar, the populist former boxer who led the country's split with the Czech Republic in 1993.

Concerned over what it sees as a trend towards intolerant authoritarianism, the Church last week publicly protested against a new anti-subversion law which, in its wording, echoes the legislation passed by the Communists in 1948.

The law, ratified by a stormy session in parliament last Tuesday, was denounced by opposition politicians, journalists and the country's large ethnic Hungarian minority, who see it as a threat to the freedoms of speech and assembly.

Under the law, which is to be challenged in the constitutional court, jail terms may be imposed on Slovaks found guilty of "disseminating false information abroad damaging to the interests of the republic", or organising public rallies judged to be "subversive".

With no clear definition of the "interests of the republic" or subversion, critics say the law may lead to political trials, or at least to a new atmosphere of fear and self-censorship.

The government says the new law is in line with Western norms and insists it will not be used on political opponents.

But even if the anti-subversion law is not actually enforced, its passage was a classic example of Mr Meciar's blunderbuss approach to politics and of the country's tendency to shoot itself in the foot.

Last Tuesday ought to have been a day of celebration. After a year of stalling, Slovak MPs finally ratified a landmark treaty of reconciliation with neighbouring Hungary, seen as an essential step in both countries' attempts to join the European Union and Nato.

Instead of basking in rare international praise, however, the government once again found

itself on the defensive, after passing a law which raised new questions about Slovakia's democratic credentials and its suitability for early membership of the EU and Nato.

Western diplomats in Bratislava are confused. Late last year, officials from the EU and the United States took the unusual step of issuing diplomatic notes, publicly voicing concern about human rights and democracy in Slovakia.

At the time, Mr Meciar, who heads the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, was waging a vicious campaign to oust his main rival, President Michal Kovac, and was even suspected of involvement in the bizarre kidnapping of one of the President's sons.

The diplomatic protests followed sharp criticism of the way in which, on his return to power, Mr Meciar took control of state broadcasting, privatisation and the intelligence service.

They confirmed a growing perception that Slovakia was no longer seen as belonging alongside the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary in the "first division" of Central European countries seeking to enter Nato and EU.

The aim of the protests was to prod Slovakia back into the democratic fold: given its location in the heart of Central Europe it was not in Western interests to alienate it, or force it into the embrace of Moscow, which seeks to revive old ties in the region.

The government, stung by the protests, blamed them on the "enemy within" and on "traitors" who had besmirched the good name of the country for their own political advantage.

But after toying with the idea of looking east for allies, it reaffirmed a desire to join the Western camp, opened up a more extensive dialogue with its would-be future partners and took some of the venom out of the attacks on Mr Kovac.

Given that stance, the passage of the anti-subversion law - part of a package of controversial new measures instigated by Mr Meciar's far-right Slovak National Party coalition partners - comes as a puzzling and disturbing new development.

After only three years of independence, Slovaks admit that while economy shows signs of very, their political culture is infancy and that, in eagerness to assert their real identity after centuries of domination by Hungarians and Czechs, mistakes are made.

Last month, Meciar appealed to the Wt to judge his country too by arguing that out of a mix of "ignorance, stupidity" Slovaks sometimes out what appear like neopagans.

In Bratislava seem to dwell on their old leaders and the question where Slovakia is head.

But one passage is enigmatic. "Democracy of course I think we live in democracy. But to think that's live here are two very difficult things."

We never
accept money from
strangers.

John 10:12

Masters of Ethiopia's Red Terror face trial for genocide

Relatives of Mengistu's countless victims have waited five years to obtain justice, writes David Orr in Addis Ababa

There are few physical reminders in Addis Ababa of the brutal Communist regime which ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991: a bust of Marx near the university; a mural of Lenin at the Ministry of Defence; and on the main thoroughfare, the soaring Victory Monument, emblazoned with a hammer-and-sickle and crowned with a red star.

Yet, for those who suffered under the rule of President Mengistu Haile Mariam, the memories of those dark years are all too real. Kebede Ademase and his wife, Bizunesh Demisse, lost three children in the Red Terror of the Seventies, when countless thousands of "counter-revolutionaries" were imprisoned, tortured and murdered.

Their 23-year-old son and 18-year-old daughter were denounced and thrown into prison at the end of 1978. Early the following year they were executed and their bodies dumped in front of a bus garage in the middle of the night. Soon after, another son, aged 21, was detained on his way home from college. After interrogation by the authorities, he was taken to the lane leading to his parents' house and shot in the head.

"I don't know why they were killed," says Mr. Ademase, a retired hospital worker. "They said my daughter wrote a subversive document. But as far as I know they weren't involved in student politics."

After all this time, Mr. Ademase and his wife might soon have the satisfaction of seeing justice done. On 4 April, the trial of the Dergue, the military junta which ruled for 17 years after its overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, is set to resume. Forty-six members of the Dergue ("committee" in the main language spoken, Amharic) will stand in the dock to answer charges of genocide and crimes against humanity.

A score of others, including President Mengistu who fled as rebels approached the capital in May 1991, and now lives in Zimbabwe, will be tried *in absentia*. They face the death penalty if convicted. "It would be wrong to say the judiciary is totally independent," says Tsehai Wada, a lawyer with the Ethiopian Human Rights Centre.

It's under quite a lot of pressure from the politicians to secure convictions. But there is little doubt that the 46 facing trial have been involved directly or indirectly in the atrocities committed during the Dergue regime.

The trials, which could last for years, will constitute the most extensive judgement of human rights violations since the Nuremberg trials at the end of the Second World War. If they are deemed a success by international observers, they could be used as models for similar actions in Rwanda.

"The Dergue trial is a huge and complex task," says Girma Wakjira, the state's special prosecutor. "We've got limited staff and resources and we're dealing with issues completely outside the previous experience of Ethiopia's legal system."

However, the government of the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, is receiving considerable international support. Argentina has provided forensic investigators to examine mass graves, the US Bar Association has given legal advice, Sweden has donated computers, and Britain and Holland have provided financial assistance.

In addition to thousands of testimonies from survivors and victims' relatives, the special prosecutor has had access to many thousands of detailed documents, including orders for executions, torture and a litany of other crimes.

"The Red Terror was organised in a very systematic and bureaucratic manner," says Mr. Wakjira.



Bitter memories: Kebede Ademase and his wife holding photographs of their three children killed by the Communist regime in the Seventies

Photograph: David Orr

"Records were meticulously kept and every last bullet used for executions accounted for. The evidence we present will amaze not only our own people, it will amaze the whole world."

About 1,900 people have been arraigned and it is the intention of the special prosecutor that all should stand trial. They have been divided into

three different categories: the political masters and decision-makers, among them those whose cases will be heard in April; the "middle management" – some 800 policemen, soldiers and administrators who carried out the day-to-day running of the Red Terror; and, finally, the alleged perpetrators of the crimes – some 900 individuals who are said to have tortured, drowned, strangled and shot thousands of their fellow countrymen.

The most prominent defendants are held at World's End, a prison and former Dergue death centre in the capital. The prisoners, who are about to enter their fifth year of detention, will have to catalogue the Dergue's atrocities.

"People have suffered terribly, people have been disabled by torture, parents of victims have lost their minds. Until the guilty are punished, the survivors cannot be released from their suffering."

No one knows how many people died at the hands of the Dergue. The names of some 54,000 victims have been registered with the Committee in Addis Ababa but the real tally could be several times as high. Kebede Ademase and his wife, whose three dead children are on the Committee's files, are even more forthright: the members of the Dergue must be given the death penalty, they say. There can be no other justice for their victims.

French power struggle: Léotard elected leader of centre-right

Acrimony as Giscard hands over the reins

MARY DEJEVSKY
Lyon

France's former defence minister, Francois Léotard, won one of the most bitter and personal contests of recent French politics yesterday to be elected leader of the country's second largest political group, the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF).

He succeeds Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who founded the UDF 18 years ago as a parliamentary base for his centre-right pro-European policy when he was President of France.

Mr. Giscard d'Estaing, who is 70, says he is stepping out of the national political limelight to concentrate on his adopted local region, the Auvergne, in central France.

As almost his last act as UDF leader, however, and one that summed up the acrimony of the two-month leadership campaign, he used his valedictory speech to endorse the candidacy of Mr. Léotard's chief rival, the aggressive former economy minister, Alain Madelin.

Mr. Madelin, whose popularity with the French public soared after he was sacked from the first government of

Alain Juppé in August, had stood on a platform of change, renewal and modernisation. He toured the country portraying Mr. Léotard as the candidate of the status quo and the UDF's inexorable decline.

In his speech at yesterday's election convention, Mr. Madelin said: "Today's status quo is, I fear, tomorrow's defeat." Ramming the point home he asked: "How can the French trust the political parties to reform French society when those parties are not capable of reforming themselves?"

Mr. Léotard was regarded by his enemies as the candidate of the party apparatus. By his friends and supporters he was seen as the "legitimate" candidate who merited the succession and would be able to keep the UDF – a loose federation of diverse political parties, each too small to have influence in its own right – united through a potentially difficult period for the political right.

All eyes are on the 1998 parliamentary elections, when the right – Gaullists and UDF alike – fear a sharp fall in their massive parliamentary majority. If not its outright loss. Their fears have been exacerbated in recent weeks as the overwhelming ma-

jority of local and parliamentary by-elections have gone against them.

One consideration of UDF members was to elect a leader who would minimise the losses in 1998. Mr. Madelin sees himself as that leader, and in his upbeat address to delegates yesterday he presented himself as someone who would be able to restore the good name of politicians and politics in the eyes of French voters and maybe return the UDF to its 1978 position as the largest political grouping on the right.

Public opinion polls among French voters generally, and among rank-and-file UDF members gave Mr. Madelin a large majority before yesterday's election.

Francois Léotard, however had the backing of the UDF apparatus and the complicated voting mechanism for the leadership – a three-part electoral college – gave him a relatively easy victory.

But he also had a hidden weapon in the shape of a running mate, Francois Bayrou.

Mr. Bayrou, education minister for the past three years, is a political bruiser equal to Mr. Madelin but more canny, as he showed yesterday.

He used his position as a candidate for the UDF national council to deliver a ruthless and highly personal attack on Mr. Madelin, painting him as a believer in US-style welfare cuts and cheap employment.

Mr. Bayrou's intervention saved Mr. Léotard whose own campaign speech had been lacklustre and pessimistic. Speaking of the "crisis" afflicting France, he said it was not just a crisis of jobs or AIDS but "a formidable crisis of civilisation".

Mr. Bayrou, however, will want his reward. He is believed to have backed Mr. Léotard only on condition that he vacates the leadership in three years' time. He has never concealed his presidential ambitions, and leadership of the UDF would give him a power base from which to stand in 2002.

Thus, however, assumes both that Mr. Léotard agrees to stand down and that the UDF is still a fighting force after the 1998 parliamentary elections.

Both Mr. Giscard d'Estaing and Mr. Madelin, along with many French political analysts, agree that without a strong, unifying and radical leader with popular appeal, the UDF risks fragmenting into the small parties from which it was formed.



Pathologists in Mirkoje Grad examining exhumed bodies being handed to Bosnian Serbs under terms of the Dayton deal

Serbs give up duo suspected of war crimes

EMMA DALY
Tuzla

Under intense pressure from Washington, Belgrade has surrendered to the international war-crimes tribunal two soldiers who confessed to involvement in the murder of hundreds of Muslims.

Zagreb is expected to compound a good weekend for the tribunal today, handing over a senior Bosnian Croat commander indicted for alleged massacres of Muslims in 1993.

Drazen Erdemovic, a Croat, and Radoslav Kremenovic, both soldiers in the Bosnian Serb army, were transferred to the court in the Hague on Saturday as witnesses and possible war-crimes suspects.

The two, seeking protection from former comrades, told reporters they had been forced to take part in the massacre of more than 900 Bosnian Muslim men captured after the fall of Srebrenica last July.

Mr. Erdemovic, who said he was an unwilling participant in the mass killings at Branjevo farm, near Janja, in eastern Bosnia, went into hiding last year, fearing retribution from other soldiers at the site.

He was arrested in Serbia hours after talking to reporters, but Belgrade, which has delayed on promises to co-operate with the court, was persuaded to turn

the two men over. Court officials have said they may be indicted for war crimes.

Belgrade's fear may be that their testimony is likely to bolster the indictments of the Bosnian Serb civilian and military leaders, Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, accused in the disappearance of up to 8,000 people from Srebrenica. Speaking on a visit to Sarajevo yesterday, the US Defence Secretary, William Perry, said: "I do not expect either Karadzic or Mladic to be in positions of power by the end of this year."

Mr. Karadzic appears to think differently. He emerged from the shadows yesterday to address a rally of Serb troops and be feted as leader of his nation. Ignoring thousands of Nato troops in nearby Sarajevo who are supposed to arrest him should they cross his path, Mr. Karadzic appeared at a factory building in the Serb "capital" of Pale to hand out medals to Bosnian Serb fighters.

Croatia, equally loath to hand over its clients to the Hague, has also agreed to US demands that General Tihomir Blaskic, former head of the Bosnian Croat militia, surrender to the court. He is expected to turn himself in today, accused of ordering the murders of Muslims during the Muslim-Croat war in Bosnia in 1993.

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HK Chinese join rush to apply for British passports

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

It was hardly planned this way but yesterday two of Hong Kong's biggest sports stadiums were crammed full of people.

One held an expatriate-dominated crowd of spectators watching the very British tribal event known as the international rugby sevens, while the other, situated near to the Immigration Department, held a rather more significant queue of Hong Kong Chinese making last minute applications for registration as British citizens so that they can qualify for British National (Overseas) (BNO) passports, a document of little value which resolutely does not allow

holders to become real British citizens.

Yet in the past few days tens of thousands have joined monster queues to secure registration as British Dependent Territory Citizens, although in a year's time they will no longer be in a British dependent territory and will become citizens of the People's Republic of China.

A middle-aged woman named Chan, emerging weary but triumphant from the Immigration Department, neatly summed up the reason why she had made an effort to register before yesterday's midnight deadline.

"Even this passport is better than the Chinese one," she

said. "I have more confidence in it."

China appears to have gone out of its way to diminish confidence in recent days. The plan to abolish the legislature was formally announced, civil servants were told they would have to sign loyalty pledges, all members of democratic parties were summarily ruled out of eligibility for the new (wholly appointed) legislature and even one notoriously vacillating but democratically-minded member of China's appointed body which is preparing for the transfer of power was told that a failure to vote in favour of the abolition of the legislature ruled him out for future membership. Against this background of



Beating the deadline: Hong Kong citizens collect their forms to apply for British overseas passports before last night's deadline. Photograph: Paul Barker/Reuters

events, which have all taken place in the space of a week, those who are eligible for this curious form of second-class British citizenship have joined the queue for British naturalisation registration. Both Hong Kong government and Chinese officials and China's supporters in the colony have sought to present the last-minute scramble to obtain British Dependent Ter-

ritory citizenship as a mere technicality. "It gives them more choices abroad," said Rita Fan, one of China's chief advisers. She was suggesting that local people

were merely interested in visa-free travel. There is an element of truth in this because holders of BNO passports have visa-free access to some 80 countries, while only Britain, after a long row, and Singapore have offered the same facility to the new Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong passport which will be issued next year.

However, this may be a side issue. Those who have sought British nationality are well aware that it does not bestow the right of abode in Britain but believe it will carry some kind of international status which may be useful if things go seriously wrong in the new Hong Kong.

Significantly, a high proportion of China's Hong Kong advisers have access to foreign passports and practically all senior civil servants have been given the option of full British citizenship as a safety net inducement for staying put.

Those with the means of escape have been the most vocal in assuring the rest of the population that everything will be all right after the Chinese takeover on 1 July 1997.

Meanwhile, over at the Hong Kong Stadium the aggressive British-style orgy of drinking, mildly outrageous behaviour and, to a lesser extent, sport, was taking place with local people giving it a wide berth.

The minority of foreigners who wish to remain in the territory after it reverts to Chinese rule were among those joining the lines outside the Immigration Department. However in this, as in a great number of other matters, China has failed to make clear the conditions under which they may be able to stay.

This, and a host of other uncertainties, has persuaded large numbers of local people to seek the security of a British passport, even though it carries no citizenship and may well cause problems for holders as the incoming administration has made clear its dislike of the British nationality scheme.

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ACCOUNT	AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS RATE OF INTEREST PA* (VARIABLE)	NET PA**
SELECT	£50,000+	2.65%	2.12%
	£25,000+	2.50%	2.00%
	£10,000+	2.15%	1.72%
	£5,000+	1.65%	1.32%
	£2,000+	1.15%	0.92%
	£500+	0.25%	0.20%
	£1+	0.20%	0.16%

An instant access account for investors who want a choice of access options (Rates also apply to Bonus Bond Select and Balanced Bond Select). In addition, also applies to the following accounts which are no longer available: High 30, Special Edition Bond, HiLife, Fixed Rate Bond, Secure Investment Bonds Issues 1 & 2, Treble Rate Bond, Overseas 3 Month Capital Account, Overseas Prime Access account (††), Cheshunt Foreign 90, Cheshunt Instant Access, Cheshunt Foreign Instant, Cheshunt Instant Gross, Cheshunt Charity Instant, Ex Aid to Thrift, Better Option Bond Issues 1 AND 2, Guaranteed Investment Account Issues 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16, No 1 Capital (††), Tiered Rate Bond, First Class Bond, 2 Year Premium Share Account, Vantage Bond, No 1 Gross, Triple Bonus (††), Bristol Plus, Moneylink, Snoopy, Guaranteed Equity Bond 3 Year Issue 1, Guaranteed Equity Bond 3 Year Issue 3, Bonus Interest Bond Issue 1, Capital Maker Bond and Capital Maker TESSA.

SPECIAL MONTHLY INCOME	£50,000+	2.62%	2.09%
For investors who want monthly income and instant access (Rates also apply to High 30 Monthly Income, Cheshunt Instant Income, Better Option Bond Monthly Income Issues 1 and 2, Overseas Monthly Income (††), No 1 Income (††), Triple Bonus Monthly Income (††) - all no longer available).	£25,000+	2.47%	1.98%
	£10,000+	2.13%	1.70%
	£5,000+	1.64%	1.31%
	£2,000+	1.14%	0.92%
	£500+	0.25%	0.20%
	£1+	0.20%	0.16%

PREMIER SAVER	£100,000+	4.50%	3.60%
An instant access account for investors who limit their access over a 12 month period (No withdrawals).	£50,000+	4.40%	3.52%
	£25,000+	4.25%	3.40%
	£10,000+	3.90%	3.12%
	£5,000+	3.35%	2.68%
	£2,000+	3.10%	2.48%
	£1,000+	2.90%	2.32%
	£500	2.35%	1.88%

(1-6 Withdrawals)	£100,000+	3.50%	2.80%
	£50,000+	3.40%	2.72%
	£25,000+	3.25%	2.60%
	£10,000+	2.90%	2.32%
	£5,000+	2.35%	1.88%
	£2,000+	2.10%	1.68%
	£1,000+	1.90%	1.52%
	£500	1.35%	1.08%

(More than 6 Withdrawals)	£100,000+	2.65%	2.12%
	£50,000+	2.50%	2.00%
	£25,000+	2.15%	1.72%
	£10,000+	1.65%	1.32%
	£5,000+	1.15%	0.92%
	£2,000+	0.25%	0.20%
	£1,000+	0.25%	0.20%
	£500	0.25%	0.20%

PREMIER PLUS CAPITAL ISSUE 1	£100,000+	4.70%	3.76%
Three months notice required for withdrawal (Rates also apply to Guaranteed Investment Account Issue 5 and Guaranteed Investment Account Extra Issue 1).	£50,000+	4.60%	3.68%
	£25,000+	4.30%	3.44%
	£10,000+	3.80%	3.04%
	£5,000+	3.15%	2.52%
	£2,000+	2.80%	2.24%
	£500+	2.65%	2.12%

PREMIER PLUS MONTHLY INCOME ISSUE 1	£100,000+	4.60%	3.68%
Three months notice required for withdrawal, and interest paid monthly.	£50,000+	4.51%	3.60%
	£25,000+	4.22%	3.37%
	£10,000+	3.74%	2.99%
	£5,000+	3.11%	2.48%
	£2,000+	2.76%	2.21%
	£500+	2.62%	2.09%

PREMIER OPTION BOND	£100,000+	5.55%	4.44%
Variable Rate Option paying interest six monthly. Issues A, B, C, D, E and F.	£50,000+	5.30%	4.24%
	£25,000+	5.00%	4.00%
	£5,000+	4.75%	3.80%

PREMIER OPTION BOND	£100,000+	5.41%	4.33%
Variable Rate Option paying interest monthly. Issues A, B, C, D, E and F.	£50,000+	5.18%	4.14%
	£25,000+	4.89%	3.91%
	£5,000+	4.65%	3.72%

PREMIER OPTION BOND (†)	£100,000+	6.10%	4.88%
Fixed Rate Option paying interest six monthly (Issue E)	£50,000+	6.05%	4.84%
	£25,000+	6.00%	4.80%
	£5,000+	5.90%	4.72%

PREMIER OPTION BOND (†)	£100,000+	5.94%	4.75%
Fixed Rate Option paying interest monthly (Issue E)	£50,000+	5.89%	4.71%
	£25,000+	5.84%	4.67%
	£5,000+	5.75%	4.60%

TESSA PLUS	£3,000+	5.45%	
A 5 year savings account with tax free interest and a special bonus interest payment of 2% on the first year's savings on maturity.	£500+	3.95%	
	£1+	1.00%	

PREMIER TESSA	£9,000	6.05%	
(Available from 01/01/96) A Follow-Up TESSA designed for savers whose original TESSA has matured.	£5,000+	5.75%	
	£500+	3.95%	
	£1+	0.35%	

PREMIER RESERVE BOND	£1,000+	5.85%	4.68%
A competitive one year bond for Bristol & West follow-up TESSA holders only.	£1+	0.35%	0.28%

BONUS TESSA	£3,000+	4.40%	
(No longer available) A 5 year savings account with tax free interest and a guaranteed interest bonus on maturity.	£500+	2.90%	
	£1+	0.50%	

THE CHILDREN'S ACCOUNT	£1+	1.90%	1.52%
The instant access account for children under 14 years of age.			

SAVINGS SHARES	£1+	0.70%	0.56%
(No longer available) Rates also apply to Cheshunt Regular Monthly Savings.			

SECURE INVESTMENT ACCOUNT ISSUE 4	£2,000+	6.35%	5.08%
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FULLY PAID SHARE	£50,000+	2.62%	2.09%
Interest paid six monthly. Rates also apply to Cheshunt Investment Share, Cheshunt Clubs, Cheshunt Ex Thrift and Cheshunt Subscription Share. (No longer available).	£25,000+	2.47%	1.98%
	£10,000+	2.13%	1.70%
	£5,000+	1.64%	1.31%
	£2,000+	1.14%	0.92%
	£500+	0.25%	0.20%
	£1+	0.20%	0.16%

BONUS BOND (Issue 2)	£250,000+	5.40%	4.32%
(No longer available) 12 month Bond account with added Loyalty Interest Bonus of 0.25% gross pa on renewal in 1st and 2nd year.	£100,000+	5.30%	4.24%
	£50,000+	5.20%	4.16%
	£25,000+	5.20%	4.16%
	£10,000+	4.70%	3.76%
	£5,000+	4.20%	3.36%

BONUS INCOME BOND Issue 2	£250,000+	5.27%	4.22%
(No longer available) 12 month Bond with added Loyalty Interest Bonus of 0.25% gross pa on renewal in 1st and 2nd year.	£100,000+	5.18%	4.14%
	£50,000+	5.08%	4.06%
	£25,000+	5.08%	4.06%
	£10,000+	4.60%	3.68%
	£5,000+	4.12%	3.30%

CHESHUNT SPECIAL 90	£50,000+	3.90%	3.12%
(No longer available) Rates also apply to Cheshunt Special 90 Gross and Cheshunt Charity 90.	£20,000+	3.60%	2.88%
	£5,000+	2.60%	2.08%
	£500+	2.20%	1.76%
	£1+	0.20%	0.16%

CHESHUNT SPECIAL 90 INCOME	£50,000+	3.83%	3.07%
(No longer available)	£20,000+	3.54%	2.83%
	£5,000+	2.57%	2.06%
	£500+	2.18%	1.74%
	£1+	0.20%	0.16%

CHESHUNT TESSA	£1+	4.70%	
(No longer available) Rates also apply to TESSA General Portfolio Linked and TESSA General Portfolio Funded.			

NOTICE FOR ACCOUNT HOLDERS

As from 6th April 1996 the Society will be required to deduct tax at the lower rate instead of basic rate (where the investor has not self-certified his or her eligibility to receive interest gross). Accordingly the terms and conditions of all the Society's investment accounts are hereby amended so that any reference to basic rate tax is to be taken as a reference to the appropriate rate of tax. Likewise until the Society has the opportunity to reprint account brochures, prospective investors are asked to bear in mind the change to lower rate tax as from 6th April 1996.

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*Gross Rates are variable and do not take account of deductions of income tax. If you are eligible to receive your interest without deduction of tax you should register on Instant Revenue form R85 which is available to all the Society's branches. **Interest payable on or after 6 April 1996 will be paid or credited after deduction of income tax at the lower rate of 20% as, subject to the required certification, gross. Interest payable before 6 April 1996 will be subject to basic rate tax at 25%. Where the tax deducted exceeds an investor's tax liability (if any), a claim may be made to the Inland Revenue for repayment of tax. For individuals whose income falls within the lower or basic rate bands, the tax deducted will match their liability to tax on the interest and they will have no gross tax to pay. Individuals who pay income tax at the higher rate of 40% will have to pay additional tax on the interest to cover the difference between the tax deducted and the higher rate tax due. Interest Rates shown as Net are purely illustrative. The actual net amount receivable by an investor who has not registered for Gross interest will depend upon the Rate of Income Tax in force at the time interest is credited or paid out. Interest is credited or paid out at (periodic) by account with the terms and conditions of the account. For conditions of withdrawal see account Terms and Conditions. Bristol & West Building Society, PO Box 27, Broad Quay, Bristol BS99 7AL.

Israeli beatings mar Palm Sunday

STEPHANIE NOLEN
Jerusalem

A traditional Palm Sunday parade in Jerusalem, held every year since Turkish rule, was marred yesterday when Israeli soldiers stopped the march and attacked young scouts who they said refused to leave the street.

The trouble began when Israeli police watching the parade ordered leaders to take down a Palestinian flag, which they said may not be flown in Jerusalem.

The flag was put away. But moments later, when the scouts tried to move into the road to enter the Christian Quarter of the Old City, police ordered them on to the sidewalk. Chaos ensued as scouts bumped into tourists. Young scouts were pushed out into the road, while marchers at the rear of the parade, oblivious to the confusion, pressed forward. About 60 Israeli soldiers in riot gear arrived. When the scouts at the head of the parade were pushed against them, the soldiers began to strike out with wooden batons.

Four marchers were taken to hospital, including George Bides, 15, whose leg was broken and four boys were arrested. Local priests worked their way to the middle of the fray, trying to disperse the crowd, many still holding their palm branches.

"We got permission from the police to have this parade, on the same route we have used for hundreds of years," said an Arab Catholic scout leader, Nabil Toubassi. "The next thing I knew the soldiers were beating the children."

Palestinians in the crowd said they believed the Israelis stopped the parade in retaliation for the Hamas suicide bombings. About 4,000 scouts normally participate, but this year only 500 came to Jerusalem because of the Israeli closure of the occupied territories.

The Latin patriarch, Michel Sabbah, head of the Palestinian Catholic Church, condemned the Israeli interference, noting it came days after Israel announced it will confiscate hundreds of acres of Palestinian land in Bethlehem to construct a military road to join two settlements. "They profaned our holy week, and now they have profaned Palm Sunday," he said. "Are there no Christian rights here?"

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With effect from 1 April 1996, First Direct will offer the following gross credit interest rates. The net rates shown here assume the rate of income tax of 20% which comes into effect on 6 April. Interest paid before 6 April will be subject to basic rate tax at 25%.

High Interest Savings Account (including 30 Day Account)				
Interest	Gross % p.a.	Gross CAR % p.a.	Net % p.a.	Net CAR % p.a.
£1 to £2,499	3.00	3.04	2.40	2.42
£2,500 to £24,999	3.50	3.55	2.80	2.83
£25,000 to £99,999	4.25	4.33	3.40	3.45
£100,000 to £249,999	4.75	4.85	3.80	3.86
£250,000 +	5.00	5.11	4.00	4.07

Direct Interest Savings Account (formerly 30 Day Account)

The following rates for the Direct Interest Savings Account also reflect the move from annual to quarterly interest which is effective from 11 April 1996.				
Interest	Gross % p.a.	Gross CAR % p.a.	Net % p.a.	Net CAR % p.a.
£1 to £999	0.50	0.50	0.40	0.40
£1,000 to £2,499	4.25	4.31	3.40	3.44
£2,500 to £24,999	5.25	5.35	4.20	4.26
£25,000 to £99,999	5.75	5.87	4.60	4.67
£100,000 to £249,999	6.00	6.13	4.80	4.88
£250,000 +	6.25	6.39	5.00	5.09

Fixed Interest Savings Account				
Interest Term	Gross % p.a.	Net % p.a.		
6 months	5.50	4.40		
1 year	5.75	4.60		
2 years	6.375	5.10		
3 years	6.75	5.40		

Cheque Account and Premier Cheque Account				
Interest	Gross % p.a.	Gross CAR % p.a.	Net % p.a.	Net CAR % p.a.
All credit balances	0.30	0.30	0.24	0.24

Gross 1% rate before the deduction of tax applied to interest on savings. Net is the net rate after the deduction of tax at the rate applied to interest on savings. CAR: Compound Annual Rate, or the true growth return taking into account the frequency of interest payments.

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April 1996

Horsemen of Afghans' near apocalypse

The 'game' of buzkashi explains a lot about a chaotic country, writes **Tim McGirk** in Mazar-e-Sharif



Killing fields: Afghan riders fighting for the headless calf used to play buzkashi. To win the carcass must be carried around a flag and dumped in a circle Photograph: Tom Pilon

"If he smiles at you, it means you're a dead man." That was my introduction to Rasool Pahlawan, a warlord in the Afghan city Mazar-e-Sharif, who goes by the appropriate nickname "Butcher of the North".

Among the many perks of being a warlord in Afghanistan today are the toys: tanks, armoured personnel carriers, helicopters, and bodyguards who carry a quiverful of rocket-propelled grenades. But no possession means as much to Rasool as his buzkashi horse.

Buzkashi is Afghanistan's national game, in which hundreds of horsemen whip and fight each other for the pleasure of grabbing a headless calf. It is a dangerous game, one at which Rasool, a large and powerful man, excels.

Buzkashi is as close to warfare as any game on earth. Brought down ages ago by the Mongol hordes (they still call him "Mr Genghis" in Mazar-e-Sharif), the horsemen are said to have used humans instead of dead calves to play buzkashi.

Louis Dupree, a historian of Afghanistan, wrote that these nomads "used prisoners of war instead of goats or calves, dismembering the hapless creatures and reducing them to masses of hominid jelly during the play". (With buzkashi in their blood, Afghans were never keen on cricket when the British brought their genteel sport over the Khyber Pass.)

Buzkashi has few, if any, rules. I saw a game held to celebrate the circumcision of another warlord's son. It took place in a rainy field near jagged blue mountains. The game was so fierce, so anarchic, it was impossible to tell if there were two teams or whether it was a free-for-all with every man for himself. It is a bit like politics in this country; the participants never know whose side the others really are on.

The object of the game is to steal the carcass, carry it around a flag about 400 metres away,

dump it into a chalked-out ring, and collect the prize money. It may sound easy, but keep in mind that there are anywhere between 50 and several hundred horsemen trying through every means short of murder to separate the rider from the carcass. (Guns and knives are banned, but whips are allowed.)

And the dead calf is nearly impossible to hold. It weighs about 100lbs and is slimy from being dunked for several days in cold water. Adding to the

mayhem, every so often, dozens of men on donkeys, clowning around, will ride into the middle of the game, carrying animal carcasses killed on the road which they sling into the ring and demand the winner's prize.

The best buzkashi players, says Roland Michaud, a Frenchman who studied the game, have lyrical names such as Murad the Cunning or Muli the Hawk. Now Rasool the Butcher (though nobody dares call him that to his face) tops the list.

Afghans say: "Better a bad rider on a good horse than a good rider on a bad horse," and Rasool is a good rider on a good horse. In between matches, when the riders stop for water, they all seem the best of friends. But once the game starts the laughter stops and they fall on each other like wolves fighting over a kill. Then, after the game, they are friends again.

But Rasool Pahlawan is different. He likes to win at buzkashi. And if he does not win

he gets angry. And then perhaps he will smile at the rider who snatched away his prize. So now, when Rasool gallops out onto the field, there are few men brave, or stupid, enough to challenge him.

The elders, who wear circular hats lined with fox fur to protect themselves against the winter rain, complain quietly that it was never like this in the past, that any horseman could prove his skills at buzkashi without having to worry about

the clan leaders taking revenge. But this new generation of warlords and commanders, say the elders, have lost respect for many of the old Uzbek civilities.

In buzkashi legend, the son of one clan chief fell in love with the daughter of his father's buzkashi rival. The rival promised his daughter to the lover if he switched sides and competed against his own father in buzkashi. He agreed, and the game ranged over many miles. So intent were the father and his

son at winning that they rode their horses over a cliff. Even in mid-air, hurtling to their deaths, they were still wrestling for the carcass.

If chess is the game for the Western military strategist, and go for the East, then buzkashi, with all its savagery and single-mindedness, is perhaps the only way of explaining why the Afghans have inflicted so much war and devastation on their country, and why a warlord's smile can mean death.

IN BRIEF

Germans fear lapse into 'Euro-fatigue'

Bonn — The German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said yesterday that plans for European union had failed to inspire Europeans but urged them not to lapse into a state of "Euro-fatigue". On Saturday, Chancellor Helmut Kohl urged EU member states not to waver from the path to "genuine" union, saying Maastricht was a great opportunity which Europeans should use to the full. Mr Kohl and Mr Kinkel were speaking after their return from the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) in Turin.

'Bandit Queen' runs

New Delhi — India's notorious "Bandit Queen" will run in elections for the federal parliament, news reports said yesterday. Phoolan Devi, who earned her nickname for reportedly murdering 20 high caste men to avenge her rape, spent 11 years in jail before she was freed on bail in 1994. Mrs Devi will run on the Socialist Party ticket from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh state. **AP**

Kuwaitis accused

Baghdad — Iraq accused Kuwait of recruiting agents to carry out sabotage attacks on the Iraqi people, United Nations observers and arms inspectors. **Reuters**

Israelis attack

Sidon — Israeli gunners responded to rocket attacks on northern Israel with an all-night assault on 15 Shiite Muslim villages in south Lebanon, forcing hundreds of families to flee for several hours. **AP**

Nigerians fired

Lagos — Nigeria's military ruler, General Sani Abacha, sacked his army and air force chiefs at the weekend. The firings come amid a high-profile visit by a UN delegation to evaluate Nigeria's progress toward democracy. **AP**

Papal appeal

Vatican City — The Pope, speaking after Palm Sunday ceremonies, appealed for the release of seven French monks kidnapped in Algeria. The monks, members of the Trappist order, were kidnapped from a mountain monastery on Wednesday, reportedly by Muslim militants. **AP**

Tamils attack

Colombo — At least 35 separatist rebels and 10 sailors were killed after Tamil rebels launched a daring attack on a navy convoy, the military said yesterday. **AP**

Togo sorry for death

Lome — Togo's President, Gnassingbe Eyadema, has formally apologised to Germany for the death of a German diplomat, shot by security forces in Lome last week. Germany lodged a strong protest and demanded an investigation into the killing of an embassy technical adviser, Thomas Ruppert. **Reuters**

Imperial past casts shadow over Japan's monument to peace

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY Nagasaki

It should have been a proud and momentous day for the city of Nagasaki. After five years of preparation and a solemn ribbon-cutting ceremony yesterday, the city will this morning open the doors of its finest monument, the new Atomic Bomb Museum. But its opening is

steeped in controversy. Situated in a gleaming new building in the city's peace park, the museum cost yen 7.6bn (about £48m).

Its 1,600 exhibits, including maps, interactive videos and gruesome photographs, describe in detail the moment, on 9 August 1945, when a plutonium bomb exploded over the city, killing more than 70,000

people. But the noble enterprise, which aimed to serve as a symbol of Nagasaki and its efforts to bring about lasting world peace, has become a political football bounced between right-wing revisionists and Japan's Asian neighbours.

The trouble began at the end of February when a précis of the new exhibition was shown to a group of conservative coun-

cillors on the local assembly. They took keen exception to a section of the museum describing the history of Japanese aggression in China and South-east Asia. After a formal protest from the assemblymen and a group of nationalistic local businessmen, several passages were removed from the written text and a photograph of civilians in the Chinese city of Nanjing

massacred by the Imperial Army in 1937 was replaced by a picture of Japanese troops victoriously entering the city.

The amendments were angrily reported in the Chinese media, including the government-sponsored *People's Daily*.

For centuries, Nagasaki has had one of the biggest Chinese populations in Japan, as well as a consulate and numerous Chi-

nese businesses. Last week, the controversial photograph was changed yet again — the compromise, which the museum's first visitors will see today, shows Chinese women being bundled off for execution by Japanese soldiers.

At yesterday's official opening protesters handed out leaflets complaining that the exhibition makes scant mention of the

20,000 Koreans, many of them slave labourers, who died in the bombing. Compared to other official accounts of the war, however, the remaining exhibits are still exceptionally strong. A video display of the Imperial Army troops in Manchuria refers unequivocally to the Japanese "invasion", a taboo word which still provokes even the conservative Japanese to squirm.

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a completely new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

in Today

Tony Blair and Bill Clinton: are they destined for a special relationship? Global warming and you: man made perils that will affect us all. The new Family Life section looks into how to backpack without tears. Do we need... Dennis the Menace: Jim White conducts a personal investigation into whether there is a place in the modern world for the classical naughty boy. Julie Myerson meanwhile takes her naughty boy to the

hairdressers. Plus Network: the complete PC guide, and **in Sport** A 24-page section with all the action from a big weekend of sport. Plus: The Monday interview: Vicente Modahl on masterminding Diane's redemption. The Grand National: the agony of the waiting game. And it's an all-red FA Cup Final, Liverpool vs Manchester United, dream or nightmare?

on Tuesday

Part three of *The Scorched Earth*: how do we slow down the global warming process? Plus: Health - the mother of a brain-injured teenager

is convinced she has found a treatment to help her son. Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media.

on Wednesday

Theatre: "Jeckyll: the musical" opened in Bromley last week. What are the chances of a West End transfer? We talk to the backers and review the show. Plus: midweek travel section, your money, finance and law.

In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

on Thursday

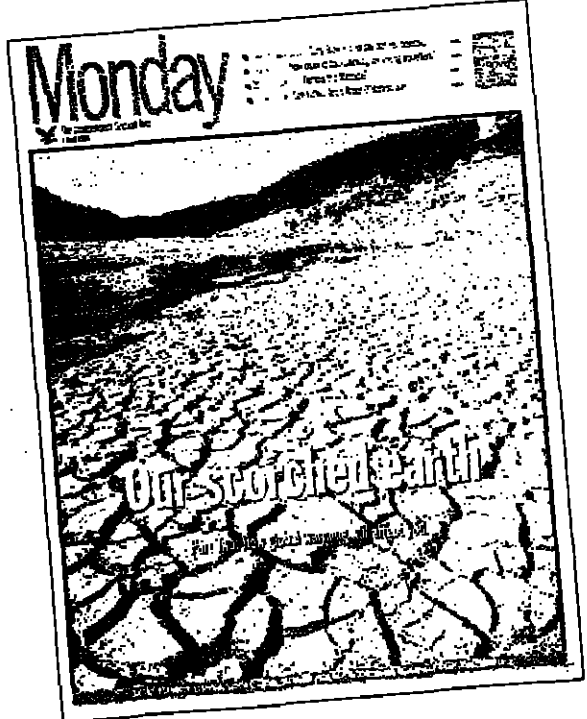
All our regular features, including Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education and graduate

plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10 1/2 inches

on Friday

24Seven - a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music



Montana stand-off: Government desperate to avoid repeat of Waco débâcle as white extremists hold out into second week



Big sky state: Montana, home to the Yellowstone River, is a haven for anti-government sects such as the Freemen besieged in Jordan

Softly softly as FBI lays siege to far-right sect

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

The FBI's new low-key, restrained policy in the seven-day-old Freemen stand-off in eastern Montana yielded its first results this weekend, as a leader of the far-right anti-government sect handed himself over voluntarily to police. Mediation offers, meanwhile, have started to pour in, reportedly including one from Randy Weaver, the white supremacist who was himself victim of a botched federal siege in 1992.

Richard Clark, wanted along with many of the other heavily armed Freemen holed up at the snow-covered ranch outside the small town of Jordan on charges of financial fraud and extortion, surrendered at Grassranger, a

settlement some 90 miles west of where the siege is being conducted by an estimated 100 FBI agents - all stationed out of view of the farm buildings.

Details of those inside are sketchy, but police reckon some 20 people are at the ranch, including at least two children, girls aged eight and 10. Several are members of local families like the Clarks, split asunder by the cult that has grown up in their midst. Last autumn Dean Clark, Richard's son, found himself confronted by his father and his grandfather carrying shotguns when he went to collect wheat and barley from land he had rented on the ranch. Should he ever return, they warned, they would kill him.

If the vast, craggy state of Montana - as large as Germany but with only 800,000 people - is a natural home of anti-government separatists, extremists, and cranks of every hue, the Freemen are among the most impassioned specimens on offer, dedicated to God and guns and bent on setting up a white Christian nation, subject to no authority other than their own.

However, their alleged crimes have been more prosaic, essentially frauds totalling \$1.8m (£1.2m), and the non-violent nature of these offences is one reason why the authorities seem determined to wait matters out.

Even more important however, the FBI is desperate to avoid a bloody débâcle along the lines of Waco, where 83 members of a religious cult died after federal agents stormed their headquarters in April 1993; or of Ruby Ridge eight months earlier, when federal agents shot dead Mr Weaver's son and wife in their attempt to

force him out of his cabin in northern Idaho.

Even so, to accept mediation could be risky. Officials here acknowledge that the mere presence of Mr Weaver could encourage members of other militias to descend on Jordan, increasing the danger of confrontation. It might also attract a still larger contingent from the national press, whose presence would only intensify pressure for overhasty action.

Whatever else, the Freemen siege has already provided one of the more bizarre US media events of 1996. The action, such as it is, is taking place in one of the remotest areas of the country. The ranch itself is 30 miles from Jordan, whose two modest motels have long since been occupied by FBI agents.

For the region, the press invasion has been an undreamt-of late winter economic windfall. For the media, though, veritable hardship conditions are the order of the hour. Ordinary phones and fax machines are few and far between, while most cellular phone networks do not include so thinly inhabited a region.

The scores of reporters and the network film crews covering the stand-off have been forced to rent local rooms at exorbitant rates, ship in mobile homes, or commute daily from Miles City, 83 miles away to the southeast (though Montana's recent decision to scrap the former 65 mph speed limit has reduced driving time to little more than an hour). If the FBI maintains its current policy, they may face a long stay. As well as thousands of rounds of ammunition, the besieged Freemen are said to have stockpiled food enough to last for months.

Mayor with mostest hugs the limelight

LOCAL
HEROES : 10

Antanas Mockus

When Antanas Mockus, the 44-year-old Mayor of Bogotá, got married in January, he and his bride took their vows while astride an elephant inside a cage full of Bengal tigers.

As a snub to the Roman Catholic Church, in which he had been married once before, Mr Mockus had rented a local circus for the wedding.

All guests, including his family, the best man and the bridesmaids, had to pay an entrance fee and the proceeds went to feeding the Colombian capital's street children.

Not only is Mr Mockus the most popular Bogotá mayor of recent times, he is also the most popular man in Colombia and the most likely next president. Opinion polls suggest he would be a runaway winner were elections to be held now.

The elections are not due until 1998 but Colombia's narcocorruption scandal, with President Ernesto Samper under investigation over cocaine-cartel funding of his campaign, means a snap poll may have to be held this year and the mayor has said he will run.

Born in Bogotá of Lithuanian parents, and partly educated in France, Mr Mockus was a well-known professor of both philosophy and mathematics at Colombia's National University until he was elected mayor in 1994. He won without really campaigning. He didn't have to. He was already a well-known eccentric, renowned most for dropping his trousers during a university debate and exposing his bare *travero* (backside) to an interlocutor whose views he did not share.

As mayor of the world's most violent capital, Mr Mockus's motto is simple: lighten up and hug each other a lot. He encourages his City Hall employees to hug one another when they come and go and encourages humour to release the stress and anger that has given the city a record per capita homicide rate.

So far, there is little sign that the violence has eased but Mr Mockus, whose beard gives him the look of a young Solzhenitsyn, has certainly put a smile on the faces of Bogotá residents. He has even sent in the clowns.

At a recent press conference, Mr Mockus produced a human-shaped figure made out of yellow balloons and began beating it up, slapping it against a wall. "I'm imagining this is someone that hurt me when I was a child," he told said. "When you're angry, don't beat it up or take it out on the person who hurt you. Make a balloon man and take it out on the balloons."

Phil Davison

NATIONWIDE MORTGAGES A GUIDE TO WINNING

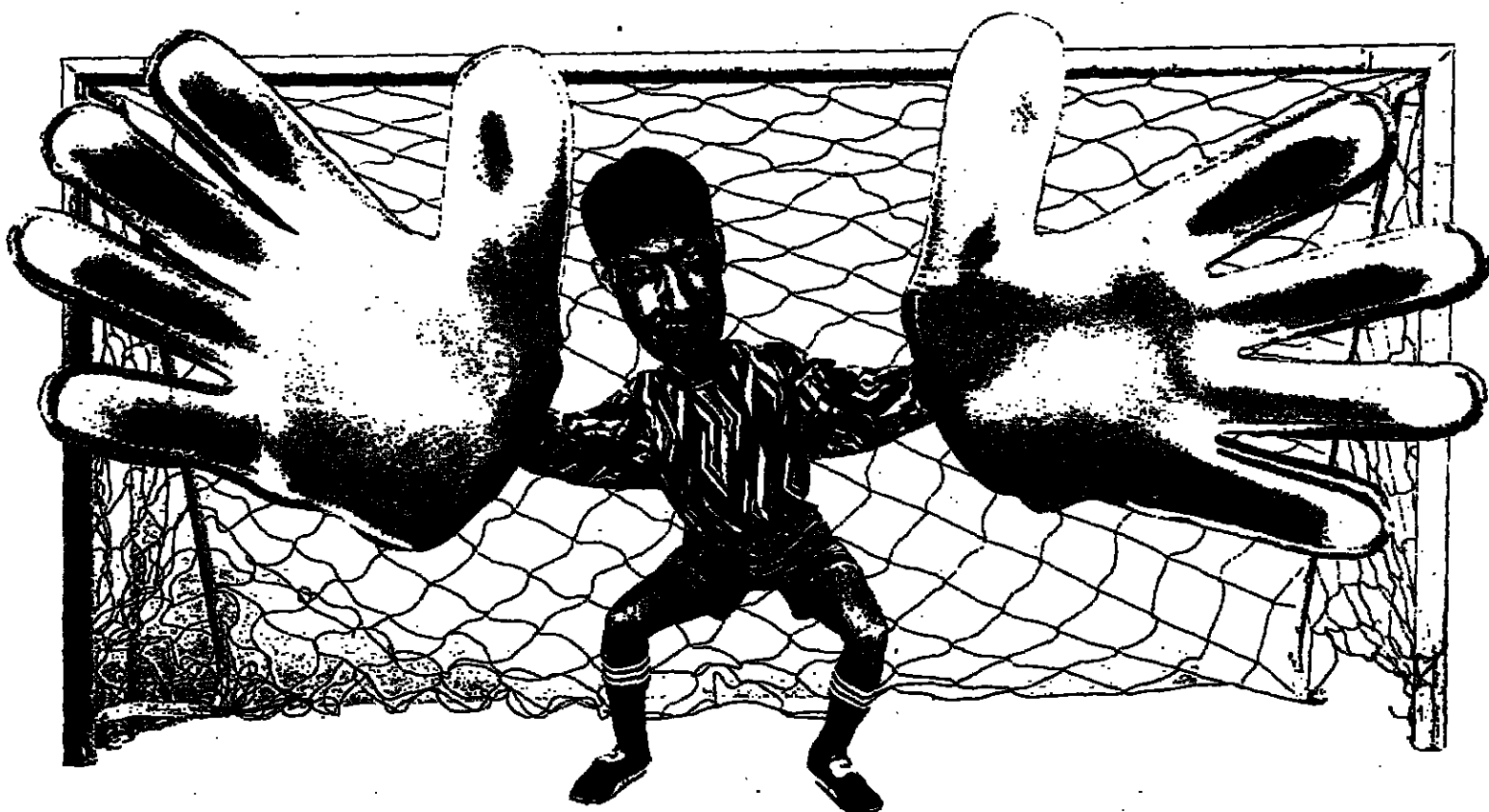


fig. 2 THE ART OF SAVING

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سید محمد الیاس

Once the men in white coats held the promise of a better future. Why have we lost our trust in them?

Pity the poor scientists who are deliberating over what should be done about BSE. "I almost want to crawl into a hole," one was reported as saying last week. "I look at the paper and think, my God, we've killed off a £500m export industry. You can't imagine what it's like. But we have to make these decisions, and we will."

Well, I'm not so sure. I'm not so sure that it ought to be scientists alone who make these decisions, and I'm not so sure, either, that in the end the biggest victim of mad cow disease will be the British beef industry or (heaven forbid) the meat-eating public, but rather science itself. Few debates in recent years have exposed scientific expertise to the harsh light of public scrutiny quite as BSE has done, and given the way the debate seems to be going there is a real possibility that the result will be extremely damaging.

It is only relatively recently that science earned for itself a position of respect in the public domain. A little over a century ago, leading scientists like Thomas Huxley and John Tyndall fought for favour with a British establishment that was more inclined to look to clergymen than to chemists or cosmologists for "expert" judgements on the issues of the day. By 1900, science had won the ideological battle for cultural recognition; but real political influence didn't come until the experience of world war finally convinced the UK that knowledge was a crucial ingredient in industrial and military success.

Those born after the end of the Second World War grew up in a climate of extraordinary optimism about science and technology. The period from 1945 to 1965 was the heyday of deference to the scientific expert. He (it was almost always he) was the architect of astonishing new discoveries – jet-powered aircraft, atomic power, antibiotics – which were bound to make the world a better place. Hoping to cash in on science's extraordinary success, others aped its methods in supposedly scientific studies of everything from parenting (remember all those post-war childcare "experts"?) to international politics (much of mathematical game theory came out of cold-war strategic studies).

This was the time when science was generally regarded as the consumer's friend. In the early days of commercial advertising on television white-coated experts happily endorsed the latest kitchen gadgets, washing powders, toothpaste and patent medicines. In the high street, the endorsement of the laboratory scientist was an apparently automatic seal of approval, a guarantee that products were not merely new but somehow improved. If science said something was good for us, then it was good for us.

Since 1965 several things have conspired to undermine this modernist deference to science. For one thing, the instrumental success of science – itself a crucial ingredient in the rise of the scientific expert – backfired on the reputation of science, as first the disarmament movement rejected nuclear weapons and then the student movement resisted the military uses of science and technology in Vietnam.

Added to this was the growing awareness of the downside of civil

R&D in the early environmental movement's protest against pesticides and pollution. In the 1950s, civil nuclear power had been a symbol of scientific and technological progress; but by the 1970s it was widely opposed by people who saw it as a symbol of all that was wrong with so-called advanced industrial society.

Today, there is a general sense that

many ways still the most widely respected authority figures in our culture have a tougher time maintaining their public reputations. In what Ulrich Beck calls "the risk society", science is no longer simply regarded as a source of solutions; it is increasingly seen as part of the problem.

The new, more sceptical attitude towards science is all around us. It is apparent, for example, in the increasing confidence with which pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace contest scientific evidence on environmental issues; and it is equally evident in the increasing assertiveness of the consumer movement. Even in the courtroom, traditionally a place where scientific experts were deferred to by judges and juries alike, they have had an increasingly rough ride. In the most widely publicised trial of modern times, an American jury recently turned its back on the bulk of the forensic evidence it had been offered by electing to acquit OJ Simpson.

This, then, is the context in which British scientists are advising on what to do about BSE. Two generations ago, it might conceivably have been possible to regard BSE as

a reasonably straightforward matter.

A new disease of cattle having been diagnosed, the possible risks to other cattle and to humans would have been assessed by a panel of experts advisers, and appropriate action would have been put in hand by government. This, in fact, might pass as a reasonable summary of the present Government's policy. The

In fact, their ignorance of the disease – of its origins, of the nature of the infectious agent, or its mode(s) of transmission, or its host range, or its relationship with Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in humans – is so great that it is far from clear what solid scientific basis there can possibly have been for many of the confident and frequently unqualified pronouncements

consider for a moment what is really involved in estimating the risk to humans from the infected brains and nervous tissues of cows suffering from BSE. At one end of a spectrum of scientificity we have measurement of the levels of infectivity in different tissues, and at the other we have the daily business of the slaughtering and dismemberment of cattle. What is the scientific discipline which delivers safe verdicts concerning the reliable separation of risky from non-risky parts of cows?

Even supposing that BSE itself was better understood and that all the relevant risks were reliably calculable, it is far from clear that science alone would provide a sufficient basis for public policy. Public policy must take account of many things: the nature of BSE; the extent of the probable risks; the nature and condition of the beef industry; the state of public attitudes and public opinion; and much else besides. At best, the scientific advisers who have been in the spotlight over BSE for almost a decade are competent to judge only some of these things. Yet at times the Government has appeared to lean on these advisers so heavily that the proper boundary

Scientists don't actually know much about BSE – its origins, the infectious agent, its relationship with CJD

trouble is, though, that we're living in the 1990s, not the 1950s; and a purely technocratic approach such as this is no longer creditable. Listening to current Government pronouncements about BSE is like living in a time warp: it is as if 30 years of questioning and criticism had simply not taken place.

What is wrong with simple deference to the scientific experts on BSE? First and foremost, by their own admission the scientists don't actually know very much about BSE.

ments about BSE that have been issued by the Ministry of Agriculture over the past few years.

A second problem with deferring to the scientific experts in cases such as these is the problematic nature of risk assessment. In Beck's "risk society" risk assessment becomes something of a cult. Today, an almost magical aura surrounds the estimation of probable harm – despite the fact that for the most part such estimation is a mixture of science and speculation. For example, just con-

between scientific and political judgement has been blurred.

I should like to have answers to the following questions:

• How, in a situation of enormous scientific ignorance and uncertainty, have scientists allowed their names and reputations to become firmly attached to unequivocal pronouncements by government and industry representatives on the safety of eating British beef?

• Why, in a situation where science, industry and public health are all necessarily involved, have scientists alone been deemed uniquely competent to pick their way through the issues?

• Why, when public confidence was always to be at least as important as public understanding and information, have scientists been left to deliberate the issues in private, without benefit even of "public interest" representatives on their expert committees?

Increasing public awareness of the true extent and limitations of scientific ignorance and uncertainty is part of our "post-modern" condition: it is part of Beck's "risk society". Ideally, the policy-making process should respond to this awareness by acknowledging the existence of ignorance and uncertainty and drawing experts, policy-makers and the public into a mature debate of the issues. In the case of BSE, this has signally failed to happen. Instead, we have witnessed the old and dimly familiar pattern of bland political reassurance coupled with steadily declining public confidence.

In the present situation, with a major industry under threat and the extent of any public health problem still far from clear, it may seem perverse and self-seeking to worry about the fate of science. But science is important. For all its imperfections, scientific knowledge is an enormously valuable asset. In order to take advantage of this asset, however, we depend upon public confidence in science and scientists as credible sources of ideas and information in their appropriate areas of expertise. It would be a tragedy if the misuse of scientific expertise were to undermine public confidence. That way lies know-nothing fundamentalism and, ultimately, the return to barbarism.

Paradoxically, the salvation of scientific expertise in the public domain lies in a greater recognition of the proper limits of science. Our public and political cultures need a greater appreciation of what science can and cannot be called upon to do. Such an appreciation will come in part from a certain amount of well-judged modesty on the part of scientists and in part from an opening up of the processes by which scientists deliberate and decide on issues such as BSE. The days are gone when scientists could expect different rules to apply to them: if they wish their views to command public confidence and public respect, then (like everyone else) they must conduct their business openly and transparently.

Without a proper appreciation of the nature and limits of scientific expertise, the public are likely to remain caught between undue deference and undue scepticism about science. As things are at present, we seem to be moving with alarming rapidity from the one to the other.

The writer is assistant director of the Science Museum.



by John Durant

we are in transition from modernism to something not so easily described but none the less radically different. Terms such as "post-industrialism" and "post-modernism" refer in part to a less monolithic, more pluralist culture in which all of the old certainties – religious, political and scientific – are in question. Post-modern culture is altogether less deferential towards experts of all kinds: bishops scarcely count any more; politicians are widely vilified; and even scientists (the latest and in

DIARY

Murder most foul on the BBC

The BBC is likely to face its most severe criticism yet for putting too much sex and violence on screen with a new drama season for schools that breaks all previous barriers.

The new season of daytime plays, which begins today, will contain scenes of teenage sex, rape, murder, killing babies, cross-dressing and suggested incest. In one drama a girl has her tongue cut out and her hands hacked off. In the same play, two men are murdered and their remains are eaten in a pie.

Details of the forthcoming BBC season outlined in an internal memo will anger campaigners for a V-chip on television sets so that parents can switch off dramas likely to upset their children. Plays seen at school would foil a V-chip.

According to one source in the BBC education department, it is not so much the worry of offending public morals that should be concerning BBC senior managers as accusations of racism from the Commission for Racial Equality and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

He added: "I've seen scripts which have a violent black man murdering his young white bride, and another concerning a vengeful Jewish money-lender. I'd have thought we were in enough trouble already with the Government. I don't believe in censorship as such, but there comes a time when decency and common sense should prevail."

The BBC has decided not to publish details of the entire series in advance of each broadcast. But it is understood that one contains a scene where a mother and her young son are brutally murdered by burglars. Another has an old man tied to a chair while his eyes are gouged out.

In an attempt to shield the writer from publicity, the BBC refused yesterday to reveal his name. A spokesman said a little lamely, "I hope people will look beyond the sex and violence to the poetry and character insights that

we genuinely believe these plays contain." He added that the Warwickshire-based playwright was not a trendy new writer, but had a proven track record. The series begins today at 11.55am on BBC 1.

Triple whammy for Blair

I hear that the Labour leader, in his ever-intensifying endeavours to woo the City, took lunch at Barclays Bank with its chief executive, Martin Taylor, and a board member. Blair gave his views on inflation, enterprise, small businesses and everything else that the two gentlemen wanted to hear, and they beamed with satisfaction as he spoke.

After Blair had departed, the board

member, who as it turned out was the former chancellor Nigel Lawson, confided to his chief executive that he found Blair more right-wing than John Major and most members of his Cabinet.

Lawson apparently sat back in his chair and said of the Labour leader with an admiring sigh: "He is a true Conservative."

As if that weren't bad enough, Blair discovered last week that he had forgotten the anniversary of his wedding to Cherie (above).

Could anything else go wrong? Yes, they came in threes, Tony. Delivering the keynote speech to the Federation of Small Businesses in Maidstone, he chose as his theme "Technology Today".



The Oscar triumph of *Braveheart*, starring Mel Gibson (left) may have confirmed to the world Scotland's image as the land of warrior folk, but those proud Highland clansmen must, I fear, be warned. A radical makeover is stirring in the lowlands. The flamboyant London fashion designer "Sebastian", the man responsible for (among others) Mystic Meg's more unusual ensembles, is designing a brand new tartan. What, then, one wonders, will the Scottish Tartans Authority, whose job it is to "safeguard this internationally valued, unique heritage" by registering new tartans, make of Sebastian's exciting new offering? His tartan is an exotic, explosion of glorious pinks. And its proposed name? The MacPuff.

What a shame that the state-of-the-art screen behind him should choose to pack up for good halfway through.

Red faces at the Pink 'Un

There was a most mysterious absence from the British Press Awards ceremony last week. Nearly all of Fleet Street's finest were gathered at the sumptuous Royal Lancaster Hotel to wine, dine and backstab as Clive Anderson handed out accolades. All that is, save the *Financial Times*. How could this be? Did the highbrow journal perhaps consider itself above such boozy beanos? Surely not. No, the reason is more simple: it had not received a single nomination. Up came the shortlist for Business Reporter of the Year – and no FT candidates. Industrial Reporter of the Year? The same story. And so on.

Had the pink one really performed that badly? "Absolutely not," an FT insider tells me. "People are very irritated here. We should have been right up there in the running – except that the person in charge of applications clean forgot, and didn't send them off until six weeks after the closing date."

No FT, no comment, no memory, no awards.

Eagle Star flies into trouble

Eagle Star may have a lavish advertising budget, but they have not, I fear, been spending it entirely wisely. One consumer decided he'd had quite enough of their advert on Sky TV, and called up the Independent Television Commission to complain. His complaint was promptly upheld. The problem? The ad was going out in Northern Ireland. And Eagle Star don't actually offer the troubled province insurance cover.

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Gummer needs a watertight plan

Roll up, roll up. It's the political spring fair, alias the beginning of the General Election campaign. See the man dip his hand into the bribe tub and pull out hand-me-down policies, gimmicks and "bright ideas" to be dusted off as shiny and original. Grammar schools. Cottage holidays. And now, the water wheeze. Today Environment Secretary John Gummer will publish a consultation paper on increasing competition in water supply which will, though he is unlikely to admit it, amount to a confession that the very basis on which water was privatised in the 1980s was mistaken. We must insist that he does not press a glass of water on a young relative, however forceful the paparazzi.

Cheaper water would be welcome, and might win votes. But first Mr Gummer and his colleagues owe the public something by way of purification. What is now being admitted is that integrated river basin management, one company for each water region – the principle on which the industry is structured – is not good for consumers. Competition only works if there are more suppliers, bringing water in from further afield. That must imply that the Government will forbid, say, the proposed takeover of South West Water by Severn Trent and Wessex. It ought to tell the Stock Exchange, and quickly.

A year ago the Director General of Water Supply put out a paper which advocated easing rules for new suppliers. He also argued for more "network competition" – selling water from one area into another. But, he warned, opportunities for inter-regional sales, as in the case of electricity, are likely to remain limited.

The Government has been embarrassed by greed in the utilities' boardrooms but must not pretend that introducing competition will be easy. Changes in supply to industry can be networked, at least where water companies' pipes are already linked. Domestic supply is less straightforward. Competition must not jeopardise water quality or lead to reduced standards in sewerage and the treatment of waste water.

As well as safety and reliability in supply, what matters to consumers is how water is paid for. The Government's plan for metering has now been abandoned. Instead of meters for all, as the 21st century dawns most people will still pay for their water on the basis of a tax – rateable value – which was abandoned in the 1980s.

Unlike gas, water is heavy and expensive to transport. Unlike gas, water quality differs considerably from one part of the country to another – the fur in Lancashire kettles is different from the kitchens of Yorkshire – that is, when Yorkshire kitchens are supplied with running water. The Government thinks short-term, when the question is how to guarantee supply over the decades to come. Global warming is a fact, its ramifications set out in the second of the "Our Scorching Earth" series in Section Two today. Rainfall deficiency is becoming usual and needs to be planned for.

This is not a regional issue to be left to the prize-winning managers of Yorkshire Water plc. Government alone has the vantage and time horizon to plan a water grid, even if the pipes are built by the companies. A strategy must embrace conservation, reductions in leaks and a plan for new supplies. All of those will call for more imagination and resolve than the Department of the Environment and the Office of Water Supply have yet shown: achieving them will take more than political showmanship.

Voices with an accent on trust

Why should West Country people sound thick? It is deeply unfair, of course. Doubtless Bristol, Plymouth, Taunton and Truro could fill Cape Canaveral with rocket scientists. And yet, there is something about those vowels which sounds, well, claggy.

It would not do if the person answering your phone inquiry about car insurance, banking or phone number used a dialect word such as that. (It means "muddy".) Not that nowadays they are likely to. The United Kingdom is becoming homogenised. Local differences, in public services, in retailing, in culture, become harder to spot. Regional dialect is dying. Yet bucking the trend, regional accents are enjoying a vogue, which is being fostered by the business community.

The Legal and General Insurance company has said it has chosen Wales for a new office because it likes the accent. Other companies have discovered the same appeal, and the hunt is on for where to locate help lines and all those businesses-at-a-distance which rely on banks of clerks who give good phone. Accent matters a lot, but so does use of English. Together they underpin customers' judgements about competence and reliability, likeability, and trustworthiness. The reason why there seem to be so many Scottish voices on the BBC is also why Scotland is tops for "call-centre" businesses. Scots, generally, sound classless, educated and warm; they have an accent but they enunciate. They score highest for both trustworthiness and competence. The best Scots is something like an educated Falkirk accent – sort of midway between Edinburgh's Morningside and Glasgow's Drumchapel.

There is a saying that people from east of the Pennines are, how to put this in a politically correct fashion, rather tight. Boycottish even. Charity flag day in Wakefield – empty streets; house-to-house collection in Huddersfield – streets are packed. But if you run a telephone bank as large as First Direct's, that reputation may be turned to advantage. It has based its operation in Leeds because Yorkshire people sound as if they will look after your money.

Not all the North does well on the good phone guide. Merseyside's perennial whine is never going to make the city of Liverpool attractive, say, for help lines. Imagine the dialogue. Broken down motorist phones help office in Everton and has to listen to five minutes' moaning about everything from the new charges on the M5 to the latest failings of the Dark Blues.

Accent acceptability penalises Birmingham, but no more than London. For the purposes of ingratiation with the housing public, neither Handsworth nor Hounslow quite has it. As for Wales and Ulster, high scores on warmth and trustworthiness but sometimes a little backward in the intelligibility stakes. Directory inquiries which fetch up at the back of Belfast can be daunting when you have to spell the names of French restaurants phonetically.

MAASTRICHT II

JUST WHEN YOU
THOUGHT IT WAS
SAFE TO GET
BACK TO THE
CONFERENCE
TABLE



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Selection of skills in schools

Sir: Your leader rightly reflects the very different approaches to education of Labour and the Conservatives ("Tories select a loser", 29 March). But Tony Mooney ("Is selection good for kids?", 29 March) claims there is a "systematic attempt" by the Tories and Labour to undermine comprehensive education.

Had Mr Mooney read the text of my speech to the Social Market Foundation he would realise that it offered both an historical perspective on the development of comprehensive education and a programme to renew its original ideals in order to ensure that it delivers the high standards envisaged by its pioneers.

The Government's schizophrenic commitment to increasing parental choice and increasing selection will not be countered by simply claiming that everything is fine in the state sector. Mr Mooney extols the virtues of "setting" by ability, as I do. It should be part of a programme of renewal for comprehensive education, recognising that diversity can and should exist within schools.

DAVID BLUNKETT MP
(Sheffield Brightside, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

Sir: I suggest that Sheila Lawlor reads Tony Mooney's companion piece to her own (29 March). Why do the proponents of selection and the re-introduction of the grammar school insist on perpetuating the myth that all comprehensive have mixed-ability classes? It is clear from Tony Mooney's essay, and from my

experience of my two sons' comprehensive school, that "setting" and "banding" are quite common. This seems to be a much fairer way of coping with children of varying abilities than separating them by school. It is, as Mr Mooney says, much easier for children to be moved from set to set than it is for them to change schools.

Mrs MARIE PATTERSON
Nuneaton, Warwickshire

Sir: Those who argue for separate schools for higher ability groups base their argument almost entirely on the premise that low performance is highly contagious, while high performance is quite the reverse. So if high performers come into contact with lower performers their performance will be in danger, but the lower performers will not benefit at all from the presence of the higher performers. If high and low performers are mixed it will always result in an overall reduction in performance.

There is no evidence for this at all. Furthermore, most advocates of selective schooling have the temerity to attack the levels of performance achieved in inner city schools, which are themselves the product of a highly selective, if voluntary, education process, whereby all the high performers have moved on, leaving a residue of low performers. This is the (unstated) downside of selection – the gradual debasement of standards in the non-selective schools as all the higher performers are attracted to the selective schools.

MICHAEL WADDILOVE
Harpenden, Hertfordshire

The military effect on lager louts

Sir: It is hard to think of anything good stemming from the abduction, attempted rape and brutal killing of a young Danish woman in Cyprus by three drunken British soldiers.

However, that appalling affair may give pause, at least, to those who urge the return of national service as a way of giving "a taste of discipline" to those who

nightly make merry and mayhem in our town centres.

The stomach-churning events of that night in Cyprus confirmed that military service does not create model citizens. Instead, in some cases, it merely converts lager louts into licentious soldiers.

MIKE BIRD
Charleywood, Hertfordshire

BSE: facts or opinions?

Sir: In the haze of speculation about possible links between BSE and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) it is hard to distinguish fact from opinion. Dr Grant's argument (27 March), that very few BSE-exposed individuals will develop CJD because only those of a rare genetic constitution are susceptible, is based on conjecture. It is true that CJD may occasionally run in families. However the extremely high incidence of this disease – one in a hundred – in those unfortunate children treated with contaminated human growth hormone suggests that genetic susceptibility is either of no relevance to transmission, or if relevant is far more common than Dr Grant would have us believe.

Dr P D LEWIS
Consultant Neuropathologist
London NW3

Sir: How soon will people realise that if beef is not safe, then nor are most sweets and most ready-made desserts? Both of these groups contain gelatine, which is made from old cattle bones.

Mrs S WHEATLEY
Havant, Hampshire

High quality of British airports

Sir: Simon Calder writes (28 March) "airports are awful ... you hang around for ages with little to do but eat uninviting food and spend a fortune in the shops on things you don't really want or need."

This may once have been the case, but there has been a huge advance in the quality of UK airports. Our interviewing of more than 400,000 passengers a year shows a continuous rise in customer satisfaction.

Nor is it acceptable for Simon Calder and Jonathan Glancey to attack retailing at airports as if it was an imposition on passengers. Research shows that 90 per cent of passengers expect and want to see comprehensive shopping and catering facilities at the airports – indeed, they want more. They understand, as well, that the income from retailing finances the £1m a day that BAA spends on further improving airport facilities.

Mr Glancey refers to a number of quality airports around the world but does not point out that they all have to be funded by the taxpayer. Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and other BAA airports, now also of the highest quality, are provided to the country at no cost to the taxpayer, not least because of the retailing success.

DES WILSON
Director Corporate and Public Affairs
BAA plc
London SW1

Sir: In answer to Jonathan Glancey's closing question: people say they like airports because when they are in one they are not either (a) at work or (b) at home.

JENNIFER C FLAYTER
Lancaster

Multiple Oscars

Sir: In her report on the Academy Awards ceremony (27 March) Marianne Macdonald states that the animator Nick Park is "the first Briton to win three Oscars". The composer John Barry has won four Oscars and the cameraman Freddie Young has won three.

ADRIAN TURNER
London W5

Germany's worldwide success

Sir: Surely the most obvious lesson Germany (and France) can learn from British economic growth in the last two years is that a 25 per cent currency devaluation boosts exports and jobs (Hamish MacRae "Jobless Germany can learn from us", 29 March). What a big fall in the Deutschmark or French franc would do to British exports to Europe is a question which British ministers and supportive commentators never ponder.

Actually, the Germans are having their *kuchen* and eating it. They have huge hangover problems from absorbing the Third World communist DDR into the Federal Republic but still manage to have efficient industrial performers based on old technology in West Germany combined with state-of-the-art investments in East Germany. But at the same time, they are buying up British car and other firms and banks and opening new manufacturing plants in the US, in China and in the Asian tigers, all busy repatriating profit back to the fatherland.

One answer offered by the Europhobes in the Cabinet and the Conservative Party is to smash Europe apart in order to teach the Germans a lesson. They

(and, to my surprise, some fellow Labour MPs) appear to want Germany to enter the 21st century decoupled from the rest of Europe, striding towards tomorrow as a nation state with a national (ist) currency, a national (ist) trade policy, and, in due course, a national (ist) defence policy towards a new German destiny.

But we can hope the Germans will learn lessons from Britain. In addition to a big devaluation they should of course massively reduce wages and step up part-time and temporary employment, introduce Latin American ratios of wealth and earnings, throw unions out of the workplace, step up the number of beggars in the streets and deregulate their agro-industry so as to permit the feeding of rotting sheep's brains to their cattle. As British ministers sit in their cars made by a German company I have no doubt they can think of other policies the Germans should adopt to raise their economic performance to the same level as that of Tory Britain.

DENIS MACSHANE MP
(Rotherham, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

Spending decisions for the NHS

Sir: Polly Toynbee may have got it wrong. She argues (25 March) it would cost £20,000 per patient year to dialyse those 1,000 over 60 years of age who could benefit from dialysis. Let us assume the cost and survival data are correct. Is this the best way to spend £20m?

This question can only be answered with comparative data which answers the question whether there other interventions which, if given an additional £20m, would produce more health gains? By spending £20m on dialysis, 1,000 renal failure patients would each get an additional year of life. By spending money on proven interventions such as improved cardiac services and GP advice to stop smoking, greater levels of health gain would be produced. Spending money on hip replacements and cataract removal would save no lives but would transform the quality of beneficiaries' lives. All spending decisions in the NHS result in less being available for other patients who could benefit

from care. With resources scarce the challenge is to target resources at those patients who can benefit most.

The advocacy of sectional interests (eg, those with chronic renal failure) does not ensure that the NHS produces maximum health gains for the UK population from its £40bn budget. Perhaps the NHS has got it right and denies benefits to these patients so it can benefit other patients more with the marginal £20m? Perhaps the NHS should not pursue mere efficiency but give up achievable health gains by spending elsewhere in order to care for needy patients in need of dialysis?

Such questions need to be resolved in a rationing debate which is explicit. Just what weight do we as a society wish to give to efficiency and equity?

Professor ALAN MAYNARD
Secretary
The Nuffield Provincial
Hospitals Trust
London W1

Scottish treasure

Sir: The article about metal detecting and Sir Anthony Grant's Treasure Bill (Section Two, 27 March) neglected to mention that the law is substantially different in Scotland. Here, all objects whose original owner or rightful heir cannot be identified are Crown property and can be claimed. When the Crown exercises its ownership rights, the finder is normally rewarded with the find's full market value.

The law is used to ensure that Scotland's material culture heritage is protected for all. The system works well, and a fruitful co-operative relationship exists between responsible metal detectors and archaeologists – to such an extent that an exhibition at the Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh features some metal detected finds. The "get rich quick" ethos does not exist here, and is rightly recognised as a chimera.

Dr ALLISON SHERIDAN
Treasure Trove Advisory
Panel Secretariat
National Museums of
Scotland
Edinburgh

TV and chips

Sir: Mr Crofton-Sleigh (Letters, 28 March) wants an M-chip capable of silencing background music from TV programmes. But it exists already. More and more often my husband and I find ourselves forced to turn off the sound and watch with subtitles on.

TOVE ANGUS
Ardingly, West Sussex

Sir: Never mind the V-chips and M-chips (Letters, 28 March). A fortune undoubtedly awaits the entrepreneur who perfects the C-chip for television sporting events. The chip that eliminates the bubbling commentator but retains the natural sounds of the occasion – crowd noises, players' curses etc.

NEIL Mc GOWAN
Aspley, Nottingham

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

The beef scare was perfect for 1 April

Today is April Fool's Day, the day on which – well, on which what happens?

Nothing much, is the answer. When I was a child, I was told that up to midday on 1 April you could play tricks on everyone, and get away with it. This sounded great, but I could never think of any tricks I could get away with.

"What kind of tricks?" I asked. "Well," said my mother, "for instance, you can tell people that their shoelaces are undone, and when they bend down to have a look, you say 'April Fool!'"

Even at the time I suspected that there must be better practical jokes in the world. I tried the shoelace joke on people, and although it occasionally worked neither side got much fun out of it. The trouble was, I could never think of a better one. Putting sugar in the salt? Putting sugar in the petrol? Digging up people's gardens? Telling them that their relatives are dead? Burning their houses down? Telling them that their houses have burnt down? Telling them that eating beef kills you?

I have never done any of these things. Indeed, I have never really moved on from the idea that April Fool's Day was all about telling



MILES KINGTON

people their shoelaces were undone. Unfortunately, even this tiny trick has been sabotaged by time – shoe technology has moved on so fast that hardly anyone seems to have shoelaces in their shoes any more, only elastic sides and Velcro fastenings. And saying to people "Hey, your Velcro shoe fastening isn't properly done up!" is less than side-splitting somehow.

Come April Fool's Day I am now reduced to piously hoping that somebody somewhere is playing some good tricks on people or that the *Guardian* will come up with another gag as good as its famous travel supplement on San Serif.

The one great thing about April Fool's Day is that it hasn't been commercialised. Nobody has ever seen a way of making a quick buck out of April Fool's Day, so it hasn't been taken over by anyone in the way that

the card and flower people have changed Mothering Sunday into Mother's Day, or in the way that the wrapping paper industry has taken over Christmas, the way the chocolate industry has claimed Easter for its own or the way St Valentine's Day has been colonised by the newspaper industry, with entire forests being cut down in Finland every year to carry messages from Muggwumps to Duckbill Platypus. Even Guy Fawkes' Day has been taken over by the harmless end of the arms trade, for heaven's sake!

But April Fool's Day stands alone, undefined, uncommercialised. Maybe it's because it's not religious. It's the religious feasts which seem to attract the hordes of Mammon most, Christmas, Easter, Whitsun. St Valentine's Day even – all have been priced free from the grasp of the Church and taken over as secular and very profitable feast days. Which is only fair, because the Christian Church stole them in the first place, took over the people's winter and springtime celebrations and gave them newfangled names based on the alleged birth and death dates of Jesus, so industry is only doing to the Church what the Church had already done to somebody else.

Not so April Fool's Day. It may be that joke shops do better trade at the end of March than other times of the year, but that's small fry compared to the Christmas shopping spree. April Fool's Day is a gloriously take it or leave it occasion. The only great threat to April Fool's Day is the way people have started behaving madly on other days which are meant to be sane.

The beef scare, for example, was perfect for 1 April. Or the phenomenon of Michael Howard, the man who never does any wrong or apologises.

Most of what Michael Howard says and does would only make sense on 1 April. Indeed, most of what the entire Government does and says is an elaborate joke, whether they are blaming Labour for the Scott Report or blaming Labour for the beef crisis.

Interesting, that, the way the Tories have started blaming Labour when things go wrong. Could it be, do you suppose, that the Tories are subconsciously so sick of being in power that they have started behaving like an opposition party already? Is the Tory government a joke in residence?

Do we have something to laugh at on April Fool's Day after all?

April 1st 1996

Tin-rattlers in need of a shake-up

Many charities are rich, relatively unaccountable and muddled in their aims. Who will dare to take them on?

Every taxpayer donates to every charity whether they like it or not, for tax exemption is simply state subsidy by another name. And yet charities are not free of the vagaries and woolly legislation. Charity Commissioners have remarkably little authority to ensure that charities actually do anything that is clearly beneficial.

With an annual income of £10bn, plus £25bn assets, many of us would never willingly give to any of them (Eton College, the Church of England?) so why does the Government do it on our behalf? But they do.

The story of the RSPCA exemplifies the strange status of these immensely rich organisations. Locally and centrally it has reserves of an estimated £100m and an income of some £48m a year – all to do something charity law did not originally intend: to care for animals, not people.

A long-standing controversy about the RSPCA surfaced again last week. The charity was warned by its own lawyers that one of its campaigns (against the use of chimpanzees in medical experiments in Holland) took them beyond the curious set of laws under which they operate. The Charity Commissioners have just sent the society a timid warning sign, "seeking clarification" on complaints raised by Sir David Steel of the Countryside Movement, among others.

The society has lost nearly half its membership over recent years. Both sides blame the other for this. In one

corner is the animal rights lobby (though wisely they do not use that term). On the other side are those who think that the RSPCA should stick to welfare and rescuing pets in peril, on which it spends the bulk of its money. The rights lot think the fussy conservatism of the society has driven away members to join more radical groups such as the anti-vivisectionists and Compassion in World Farming, which (not being charities) are free of all campaigning constraint. The welfare lot think good old-fashioned "caring country people" have been driven away by the anti-hunting, anti-fishing, anti-farming, vegetarian tone of recent years.

Both sides accuse the other of entryism, both with some justification. Recently the British Field Sports Society and its allies have been calling upon members to join the RSPCA to vote out the animal rightists on the council. On the other side, over the years there have been complaints about animal liberationists infiltrating the society.

But who is an entryist? It all depends where the true heart and soul of the society really lies. The council member with the second-highest number of votes is Angela Walder, a vigorous vegan, who from her Arcadian Cattery on the Isle of Sheppey hurls her defiance: "To hell with the Charity Commissioners!" she cries with glee. She wants to continue campaigning on Dutch chimpanzees, whatever the state of the law. She was thrown out in 1988



POLLY TOYNEE

We no longer know what we are giving for or to whom

for bringing the society into disrepute, but now she is voted back and chairs the scientific and technical committee. Letting in anyone pro-hunting, she says, would be "like letting paedophiles into the NSPCC".

Does all this sound familiar? To veterans of the bad old days of the Labour Party, for animal rights read democratic socialism, and there you have it.

Ideologically, the RSPCA has a deep problem, for there is no clear dividing line between where "welfare" ends and "rights" begins. Prosecuting people who are wantonly cruel to pets is the easy bit. But if you happen to be a vegan, then preventing cruelty includes not killing animals at all. Angela Walder, for instance, grumbles

that she was called in the other day to help a woman who was having trouble bottle-feeding a pet lamb she had been given. "She was in tears, really upset that it might die. Then I asked her what that smell was in the kitchen, and she said it was a leg of lamb for their Sunday lunch!"

The 170-year-old RSPCA teeters along a tightrope of the exceedingly baffling charity laws, which is why it now refers everything to the Commission for their opinion. To be registered, a charity must serve one of four purposes: religion, education, the benefit of the community or the relief of poverty. These days, both religion and education are dubious beneficiaries of the state's purse; however, note that there is no mention of benefiting animals. So how did the RSPCA ever get registered?

Richard Fries, Chief Charity Commissioner, tries to explain, but it sounds more like theology than law: "Animals are not a charitable cause *per se*," he says. "But if treating animals well contributes to the ennobling and uplifting of human nature, then that is a charitable function."

Ah, so in law the money someone puts in the tin is not for the battered cat but for the soul of the giver?

So in what ways may the RSPCA set about ennobling us? "They may take action on behalf of animals, provided it does not conflict with the interests of human beings since humans always come first in charity law." So they can-

not campaign against the use of chimpanzees in Dutch Aids experiments designed to save humans – they can only campaign for the chimpanzees to be kept in better conditions. The moderate welfare lobby are now trying to claim that any animal rights perspective also breaches charity law, as it is not for human benefit.

At this point the whole thing seems so dead that it illuminates the nonsense at the heart of charity law. They are not allowed to campaign politically, but what is "political"? Everything that matters is political and so the old concept of "charity" is now dead. These are big businesses with baggy rules, run by amateur boards with a lot of relatively unaccountable money swashing about in them. Many are riddled with fundamental contradictions about their purpose. Those charities that do social work now find their relationship with government so close that they are virtually agencies of the state.

Putting a coin in the tin, we no longer know what we are giving for or to whom, let alone why our taxes should end up as hidden subsidies for strange religious or animal groups. The Government once promised reform, but backed off in fear of these mighty vested interests: last month a new law brought up a minor tightening up of account-keeping. The charitable impulse remains strong but the whole creaking edifice needs a new set of guiding principles. Will any political party be brave enough?

comment

After the gloom, a lighter outlook

Andrew Brown welcomes the end of one of the worst winters for Seasonal Affective Disorder

The first day of real spring in the cities of the north, after months of frozen slush and darkness, has an unofficial name among the less respectable. In Gothenburg when I lived there it was known as Tit Day: the morning when the public transport system was transformed as all the girls went to work in T-shirts.

This was perhaps rather vulgar but it was also a vivid expression of real deliverance from the draughty dark cellar of winter. SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) is now a recognised disease, striking almost everyone to a greater or lesser degree in winter; and the long grey winter we have just been through in this country has been one of the worst for it on record.

This January was apparently the most light-starved since records began, preceded by the tenth coldest December this century and the chilliest February for two decades. All of which has a demoralising impact on the human psyche. The weather produced record levels of winter depression.

"There might be a physiological explanation for it," says Cary Cooper, Professor of Occupational Psychology at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. "But I think it is probably more psychological in most cases, though some people do get it very badly."

Arctic countries have long had terms for the *cooped* of winter: "Cabin fever" and "Lapp sickness" both describe a sort of madness of distilled boredom which comes over people after months in semi-darkness with nothing to do outside. They also, have a special term for the grey season of transition between winter and spring, when the snow has receded in patches, leaving gasps of raw, frozen mud all over the lifeless earth and the icicles drip inexhaustibly without ever melting. That season of transition is when the suicide rate really perks up.

In more temperate regions, like southern England, there are likely to be less dramatic explanations for madness than the weather. Work, for instance. "The high-risk sad period, from October to March, is probably the time of year when people's workload is highest," according to Professor Cooper. "People are working longer and longer hours, getting up in the dark, going to work in the dark, and there are all sorts of reasons why it might make people feel depressed."

And now that two-thirds of all couples are both working, the impact is heightened.

It has been a vintage year for SAD on the other side of the Atlantic. On the east coast, around New York, even if everyone there is always ready to seize on the latest neurosis, they have also had a particularly long and unremitting season of transition this year.

The insight from America, however, is that this can often be cured by moving northwards rather than south. There may be a physiological explanation for part of this, says Professor Cooper. Most of Canada is bright with snow at the moment, and the physiological

theory of SAD claims that it is the lack of light which depresses susceptible people. Hence it can be treated by putting sufferers in special treatment cabinets and blasting them with artificial light made up to the frequencies of a delicious summer.

However simpler and more mundane cures may work, too. "There are other ways than going to Canada," says Professor Cooper. "Perhaps the simplest solution is to ensure that you go somewhere that there is a lot of sun." Those people with serious physiological SAD might need several two week-long breaks during the danger period.

Any expert who prescribes winter breaks in the sun must know what he is talking about. But Professor Cooper's advice can be even more helpful than that: "I think it's about changing your lifestyle," he says. For those SAD sufferers whose condition is less acute, "it might be enough to get away for a long weekend to a nice hotel." Change is all most of us need to escape from a dull, humdrum, overloaded world, full of black skies.

If none of these methods work, then Professor Cooper, originally from Los Angeles, has an ultimate solution: send people from here to experience the changeless all-year-round summer smog of his hometown. Then they will be thankful for an English winter. It is either that or wait for the T-shirts.

There may be trouble ahead

After five years of revolution in the NHS the prognosis is far from healthy, argues Nick Timmins

Anniversaries have resonance. Today's is the fifth for the Government's NHS reforms. But it is also the tenth for the financial decisions which led in 1987 to the NHS spending crisis, which in turn produced a major NHS review. In recent months, there have been some uncomfortable parallels with that period a decade ago when thousands of beds were shut, staff shortages left intensive care beds empty and a sense of crisis descended on the service and on the public's attitude towards it. Once again for the NHS, 1996 looks likely to be another year of living dangerously.

On one level, today's news is good news. With the abolition of regions and the merger of health authorities a line of sorts is being drawn under the continual, almost Maoist, revolution in organisation and structures that the service has undergone since 1991.

It is a time that has seen some genuine gains – from transformed relationships between GPs and hospitals to tumbling waiting times for non-emergency treatment. The average time on an NHS waiting list has gotten on for almost halved since 1991. The very longest waits have all but disappeared.

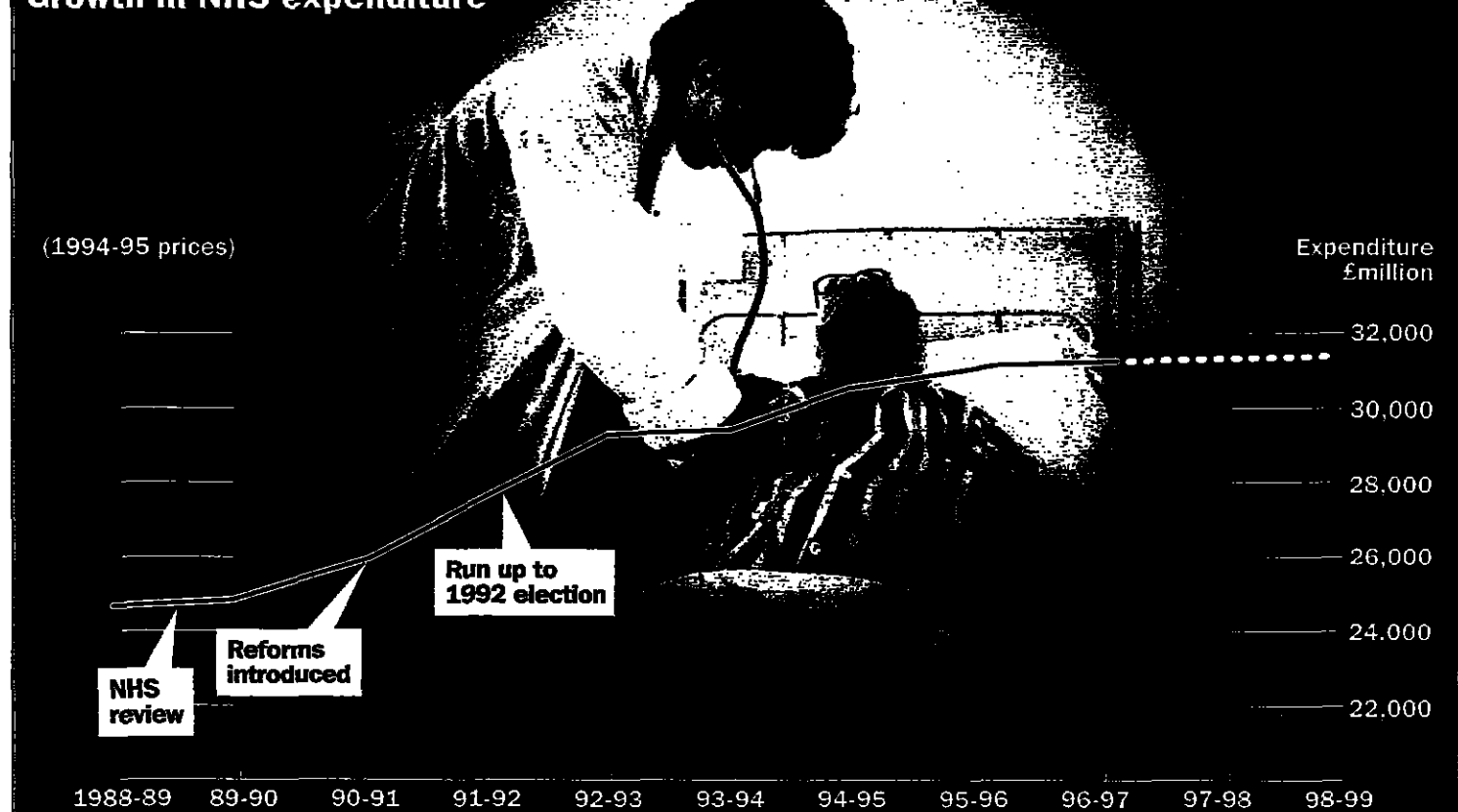
Yet how much of this is due to the reforms? How much to the extra cash Government threw at its new system to ensure it worked? And how much to changes that were happening anyway – more day surgery, continued medical advances? Untangling all that is an impossible task. And the sense remains that another crisis may be looming.

The reasons for trepidation are threefold. First, an NHS review, set up in 1988 because of a spending crisis, ironically did nothing in the end to address the level of spending or how the NHS should be financed. It reorganised the system but not the cash. Second, a stack of problems is building, some to do with the reforms, but many not. And third, the NHS is operating in a changed climate. All three interact.

Start with the money. Several years of generous settlements have been followed by a steady tightening of the screws. This winter, the NHS came closest to breakdown since 1987 as emergencies rose, the midwest of flu epidemics struck and the NHS found that the new system lacks some of the flexibility of the old. Waiting-time guarantees were honoured – but only at the expense of not flooding the new, dedicated day-surgery units with medical emergencies. The result has been some awesome waits in accident and emergency departments, patients on trolleys and a sense that the NHS is failing at the one thing it always did best: emergency care.

Compounding this is a medical staffing crisis which may be the single most serious issue facing the service. There are a number of reasons for this. A miscalculation over medical school

Growth in NHS expenditure



numbers back in the 1980s; more women doctors opting to work part-time; cuts in junior doctors' hours; and a dramatic re-working of consultant training – all have combined to produce both painful new pressures to reorganise hospital services and shortages of medical staff. In a further echo of 1987 crisis, there are also shortages of intensive care nurses. These will require more organisational change within hospitals, but need money and financial flexibility to ease them through.

Yet in key areas the service has actually lost, rather than gained, financial flexibility. The growth of fundholding has reduced health authorities' ability to switch spending between waiting lists and emergency care – a situation that will intensify as the range of procedures which GP fundholders can buy increases significantly from today. It has become harder to swap capital spending for revenue and vice versa. This makes tackling the difficulties outlined above, and exercising one of the NHS's greatest arts – simply muddling through – more difficult. And the much-vaunted private finance initiative has yet to help. It has delayed not only big building but smaller rationalisations, while producing a large cut in capital spending that it has yet to replace.

Finally, there is no back pocket. As has become clear as Stephen Dorrell

has announced initiatives to tackle a series of crises – mental health, intensive care beds, accident and emergency staffing – there has been no hidden cash, held back, to lubricate these changes. And there still won't be any this financial year. For despite an election drawing near, and in an echo of 1987, the Government has produced for the NHS the toughest year financially

It is an explosive mixture ... and an eruption could match the dark days of 1987

since the reforms came in – after a year in which it has run tight as a drawstring. Meanwhile, the service is operating in a changed climate. The purchaser/provider split has made more explicit the decisions about rationing and priorities that were always made, but usually made quietly, behind closed doors. The sense that the NHS is less comprehensive than it was is growing. And the private sector – in the shape of the pharmaceutical companies and the private insurers – is circling.

Both have a vested interest in more

private spending. The health insurers, faced with minimal growth since the 1990 recession, have become more aggressive, and in some cases less honest, in their marketing. In part that reflects increased competition as non-traditional health insurers such as Norwich Union have moved in. But it also reflects a change of personnel at the top. The gentlemen who ran the traditional insurers such as BUPA and PPP, and who were broadly happy to live in a quiet symbiosis with the NHS, have been replaced by a younger and more aggressive breed, prepared to argue more openly the case for more private spending. The result – reflected in projects like the drug-industry sponsored Healthcare 2000 – is a louder argument that only private spending can close the gap between demand and resources, an argument with which other countries (with higher private health care spending than the UK but similar problems over rationing) might not agree.

On top of that, the reforms have helped to silence many of the traditional voices calling for more money for the NHS. Health authorities – stripped of professional and local authority pressure groups – now manage the cash they are given rather than making the case for more. Managers, likewise, now manage rather than agitate. The British Medical Association and the

Royal College of Nursing have both been marginalised. And even some of the health service academics, anxious to appear modern in a climate where advocating more public spending is seen as old-fashioned, have joined the argument that the NHS may need to charge more, or provide a "core" service, or shift in some more dramatic way away from its tradition as a tax-funded, free-at-the-point-of-use service – despite having no prescription to offer as to how to achieve that with equity.

The case for more NHS spending is thus going by default with no chance that the Labour Party, terrified of any charge of tax and spend, will rectify it certainly not this side of an election, and quite possibly not the other.

An explosive mixture is in the making. A mixture of long-term trends, short-term crises, some effects of the NHS reforms but, most immediately, an excessive tightening of the spending screw may next winter produce an eruption in the NHS to match the dark days of 1987: a bitter irony when in many ways the service is performing as well, if not better, than before.

Such an explosion would raise again the question that the outcome of the NHS review ducked. How much should we spend on the NHS, and should we spend it publicly? The answer this time might be different.

In 1866, cattle plague was seen as a sign from God. Matthew Cragoe looks at the ensuing spiritual crisis

Cattle plagues in this country are nothing new. Exactly 130 years ago, in the early months of 1866, the nation was gripped by panic as rinderpest cut a deadly swathe through the kingdom's horned population. Within eight months, three times as many cattle had died from the disease as did all the human beings claimed by the cholera outbreak around the same time.

The affect upon counties like Cheshire, the dairying capital of England, was catastrophic: approximately 140,000 of 200,000 head of cattle in the county were either killed by the disease or compulsorily slaughtered when suspected of carrying it.

A crisis of these dimensions naturally raised serious questions. What was responsible for the disease?

Why had it been sent? In seeking answers, the Victorians turned not only to science, but also to religion. In the middle of the last century, people inhabited a world still deliberately constructed by an omniscient Creator. Thus it seemed perfectly natural that the government should ask The Archbishop of Canterbury to compose a prayer "For Relief from the Plague now existing amongst Cattle", even as it set in train a scientific investigation. The prayer was read in all churches for the duration of the outbreak.

Six months later, when science had still not found an answer, the Church went a step further, and appointed public "Days of Humiliation" where a proper display of communal penitence could be made. In towns like Ipswich and Canterbury, even in London itself, businesses closed and people hurried to the Services. The hope of those who attended was not simply relief from the plague, but enlightenment as to its moral dimensions.

The cattle plague was interpreted as part of a continuing dialogue between the Almighty and His fallen children. As one Herefordshire church warden remarked, he wanted

to know "whether in this AD 1866, the Almighty dealt with His people as He did with the Israelites of old".

People also wanted to know why God had chosen to afflict the cattle. What message was it intended to convey? Here, many answers were forthcoming. Dean Close, in Carlisle, identified the vice of drunkenness as the one "more especially calculated to provoke the Divine displeasure". In Birmingham, Dr Miller blamed non-observance of the Sabbath. Within weeks of the churches in England sending up their prayers, the cattle plague also began to abate.

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The writer is senior lecturer in British History at the University of Hertfordshire.

Her fourth birthday may well be her last, but she isn't ill



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obituaries / gazette

Gyula Kállai

Gyula Kállai, the Hungarian Communist politician, was one of the most senior officials to help János Kádár, the party leader, restore and consolidate Communist rule in Hungary after the 1956 uprising.

Born into the obscurity and poverty of village life in the final years of the Austro-Hungarian empire, during the Communist era he rose through the party ranks to become prime minister in the mid-1960s, only to be moved out of that job when Kádár decided to pursue a more reformist policy. Thereafter, he was gradually eased out of the leadership, though he retained a number of largely honorific posts right up to the collapse of the old Communist establishment in 1989.

Kállai was born in southeast Hungary in 1910, one of seven children of a shoemaker. It was hardly an auspicious start, either for making a successful career or for adopting Marxist-Leninist views. Kállai recalls in his memoirs his teachers asking when he misbehaved in school: "Where on earth do you think you are, in Moscow?"

Unlike many of Hungary's Communist leaders who did find refuge in Moscow in the 1930s and then became obedient servants to Stalin's every whim, the young Kállai who had joined the tiny and then illegal Communist movement in 1931 remained in Hungary. He enrolled at university in Budapest, studying Hungarian and Latin; a remarkable feat at the time – barely 1 per cent of college students were the children of peasants or the rural poor.

Kállai became a journalist, a profession well-suited to propagating the Communist cause through left-wing publications, especially after the mid-1930s when Moscow had decreed co-operation with other left-centre parties. In Hungary, where the Communist Party remained banned, this meant work in other organisations. Kállai became a successful practitioner of this policy of entryism when he joined the Social Democratic Party's newspaper, *Népszava*, without his colleagues realising that he was a card-carrying member of the Communist Party.

Though he was involved in the anti-war and anti-German movements, Kállai escaped arrest, except for a brief period of detention in 1942. After the Second World War, he was well-placed for promotion in the increasingly Communist-dominated coalition governments that ruled Hungary until one-party dictatorship was imposed in 1948. His extensive contacts with the Social Democrats and with the Populist movement of rural, left-wing nationalist intellectuals helped him to senior posts in the information, propaganda and culture departments in his own party and in the government.

But as the paranoia of Mátyás Rákosi, Hungary's Stalinist ruler, began to extend from real and imagined political enemies in other parties to decimate the ranks of the Communist leadership itself, Kállai's strengths became the vehicle for his temporary undoing.

After serving two years as foreign minister, in 1951 he was arrested along with other senior officials and charged with anti-state activities. As with his fellow defendants, Kállai's only crime was to have started and remained a home-grown Communist – a group distrusted by the so-called Muscovites, led by

Rákosi, who had spent long periods in the Soviet Union under Stalin's gaze. His contacts with Hungary's non-Communist left-wing movements before and during the war now became proof of treason in the eyes of the Stalinist leadership.

Kállai spent three years in prison before being released in 1954 during the thaw that followed Stalin's death. Unlike many of his colleagues for whom their trial and imprisonment on trumped-up charges had become the inspiration to struggle for a root-and-branch reform of the Communist system, Kállai emerged from gaol blaming not the regime as a whole but only the errors of its leaders. He moved back into cultural administration, working as deputy minister of education and then as minister after the 1956 pro-democracy uprising.

With the uprising crushed by Soviet tanks, Kállai joined the small band of leaders around Kádár who began to restore Communist rule in the country. If Kádár was not impressed by Kállai's abilities, he had few people to choose from. He was reluctant to take on too many Stalinists from the discredited

neering; he did not interfere in his ministers' departmental responsibilities; and he combined the thinking of an educated, though dogmatic, Marxist with the cautious shrewdness of a peasant.

Ultimate power, though, was not in the hands of the government but of the Communist Party, renamed the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) by Kádár in 1956, who remained in control of Hungarian political life until the late 1980s. And although he had to relinquish the post of prime minister to Kállai in 1965, this was largely in response to Moscow's requirements at a time when the post-Khrushchev leadership decreed that the posts of party leader and prime minister should be separated.

The appointment of Kállai – more unquestioningly loyal to the Kremlin than Kádár – as prime minister was a sensible choice for Kádár. He was about to embark on far-reaching economic reforms and it was crucial to reassure Moscow that the Communists would not lose control over a less highly regulated economy and society. However, on the eve of the introduction of the reforms, which started at the beginning of 1968, Kádár needed to replace Kállai with an economist who had reformist credentials. In 1967 he was replaced as prime minister by Jenő Fock and shunted off to become Speaker of the National Assembly. Meeting four times a year for one or two days, this was a rubber-stamp body. Kállai's influence was on the wane.

He was removed from the HSWP's policy-making Politburo in 1975 for no particular reason other than that Kádár had been forced by pressure from an increasingly inflexible Soviet leadership to sack some prominent reformers; and to show the Hungarian public that this was not the end of the more liberal economic policies, he also ousted some moderate politicians, such as Kállai.

Out of the centre of power, Kállai retained a seat on the HSWP's "Parliament", the central committee, until that body was disbanded when the HSWP was replaced by a Western-style social democratic party in 1989. Meanwhile, Kállai's intense loyalty to – and fear of – Moscow had remained. In the early 1980s he was one of only two members of the over 100-strong central committee to oppose the leadership's decision to apply for membership of the International Monetary Fund without first consulting Moscow – which was an unprecedented act of independence by Hungary at the time.

Kállai disappeared from the Hungarian political scene after the collapse of Communism in 1989. In his final years he did not become an embittered opponent of the new democratic regime; in private he accepted Hungary's transformation as a fact of political life. He and his family shunned the media to such an extent that even his death was announced with a week's delay after the funeral had taken place.

Gabriel Partos

Gyula Kállai, politician; born Bercényifalva, Hungary 1 June 1910; Prime Minister of Hungary 1965-67; member of the HSWP Politburo 1965-75; Speaker of the National Assembly 1967-71; married Gabriella Alnoch (two daughters); died Budapest 12 March 1996.



Kállai: combined the thinking of an educated Marxist with the shrewdness of a peasant



Murray (right), with the explorer Eric Shipton (left) and the surgeon Michael Ward sheltering from the sun in the Arun river, Nepal, 1951. Murray was deputy leader of the Everest reconnaissance expedition that year, in advance of the successful assault on the summit by Hillary and Tenzing in 1953. Photograph: Royal Geographical Society

W. H. Murray

W. H. Murray was a mountaineer, an author and a soldier. The three strands of a full life were deeply intertwined; Murray will probably be best remembered for the ice climbs he made in his native Scotland more than 60 years ago which set the stage for the publication of two books about Britain's high places. His *Mountaineering in Scotland* (1947) and *Undiscovered Scotland* (1951) have an honoured place on the bookshelves of many enthusiasts.

The challenging winter climbs marked him out in the mountaineering world as a pioneer. But what prompted Murray to write a geologist far removed from the Scottish mountains – to a time and a

place ruled by sand and heat rather than scree and cold.

The Western Desert was a Second World War battleground for nearly three years before the Allied forces expelled the Axis from North Africa. In June 1942 Rommel's Panzers had Cairo in their sights and were riding high. Early in the war Murray had enlisted in the Highland Light Infantry, at Maryhill Barracks, Glasgow. He was posted to the Middle East and after the fall of Tobruk in June 1942 German tanks fell on the survivors of his infantry rolls for a first draft, which was confiscated by a German officer who, unlike the Afrika Korps tank commander who captured him, had

of "pea-shooter". Murray was taken prisoner by a German tank commander who turned out to be a mountaineer. He was given a greatcoat and food and sent to the rear to begin three years behind barbed wire.

Incarceration left its mark on many POWs, but Bill Murray continued the activity he loved and in 1950 led expeditions to Garhiwal and Almor in the Himalayas. He was deputy leader on the reconnaissance of Everest in 1951, but difficulties in acclimatising to the altitude excluded him from the successful assault by Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing on the world's highest peak in 1953.

In later life he wrote extensively – guidebooks, works of

topography, magazine articles and fiction. He was awarded the Mungo Park Medal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1953, and appointed OBE in 1966.

Tony Beath

William Hutchison Murray, mountaineer, writer, soldier; born Liverpool 18 March 1913; OBE 1966; books include *Mountaineering in Scotland* 1947, *Undiscovered Scotland* 1951, *The Story of Everest* 1953, *Highland Landscape* 1962, *The Hebrides* 1966, *Companion Guide to the West Highlands of Scotland* 1968, *The Curling Companion* 1981, *Rob Roy MacGregor* 1982; married; died 19 March 1996.

McWelling Todman

Islands – and most island people – do not take kindly to distinguished difference, let alone quiet eminence, from among their resident number. Caribbean island people, anyway, put herself up as a day will pull her down.

There can be exceptions. McWelling Todman was one. It is not often in such societies that you find a man who eschews family antagonisms and rivalries, who is trusted and listened to with respect by all political groupings and by civil servants. No one in the British Virgin Islands, or in the

Caribbean as a whole, ever put

Todman began his adult life as a teacher in the high noon of colonialism. He learnt in the classroom to assemble his material and to deliver it to his first critical listeners with clarity and persuasiveness.

If he never mapped the destiny of the life of his island people, Todman certainly helped to shape it. He was a background confidant and trusted unofficial adviser to more than one Chief Minister of the territory.

He was also a regular lay preacher, who filled the pews at the Road Town Methodist Church. "Mac Todman is preaching on Sunday," my Finance Ministry colleague and now the choirmaster would say. "You should come."

Todman's words could come shooting out from the pulpit as from a machine-gun, peppering the congregation with intellectual conviction and passion. It was not fire-and-brimstone stuff, though; nor judgemental evangelism. On one occasion he roared the Virginian men for their marital infidelities and irresponsibility; but he did so with a smile on his face.



Todman: machine-gun preaching

In 1967 Todman, who had been called to the Bar in London at Gray's Inn, set up his own practice in Tortola. More than 20 barristers have followed; but he was the first BV Islander to do so. Before that, he had varying administrative experience in the BVI and in Antigua before moving in 1957 to Barbados and then Trinidad on the founding staff of the embryonic but stillborn Federal Government of the West Indies.

In the early 1980s, the tiny British Virgin Islands embarked on the improbable task of renegotiating its on-notice double taxation treaty with the United States. Powerful forces were wheeled in at the US Treasury in Washington. The BVI delegation there was headed by Chief Minister Lavette Stoute.

The only other BV Islander was Todman, by now a QC: the rest were white expatriates. During months of protracted negotiations, Todman's voice within the delegation was often decisive on tricky issues with local implications and significance. Todman was an avid reader. He seemed to have a new book for each flight – from George Orwell to V.S. Naipaul, Salman

Rushdie to Martin Luther King. Lately, it might have been Nelson Mandela or perhaps Colin Powell. The human condition, from a West Indian perspective, was his constant innermost preoccupation.

A Fiscal Review held by the government in 1981 was a major exercise in pointing the way forward for the tax structure and economy of the territory. Tourist promotion was in its infancy; the BVI as a significant offshore finance centre was no more than a dream. Annual budgetary grant-in-aid dependence on Britain was too recent to be a comfortable memory; and foreign capital investment was spasmodic and ill-managed. There were informal moves to introduce what amounted to a capital gains tax on sales of land between non-belongers (foreigners). Todman's view, which the committee endorsed, was that such action would be contrary to the philosophy on which the fiscal sector of the BVI economy was based and could do serious damage to the government's efforts to build up the BVI as a low-tax regime and an offshore base for legitimate

and properly administered commercial undertakings.

Throughout the Eighties, there was a fierce debate about the conditions under which non-belongers should be permitted to come and work in the BVI. As always, Todman's views were clear: the interests of the BVI came first. The government had an inalienable right, indeed obligation, to decide which non-belongers should be permitted to carry on business, including the practice of his own law profession, in the territory.

Todman never sought authoritative power for himself – and this was the key to the trust which he engendered and enjoyed in the community. Further, he never asked to be paid for his public services to governments and people.

Kenneth Bain

McWelling Todman, lawyer and public servant; born Tortola, British Virgin Islands 25 December 1923; chairman, BVI Public Service Commission 1970-94; OBE 1970, CBE 1988; QC 1980; married 1952 Audrey Creque (one son, one daughter, and one son deceased); died 7 March 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

IN MEMORIAM

BRADLEY Alfred, 1925-91. With love on this, the fifth anniversary from Judith, Jeremy, Simon, Petra, Alison, Jonathan and Rachel.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL. Telephone 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Wills

Sir William Godfrey Agnew, of South Ascot, Berkshire, former Clerk of the Privy Council, left estate valued at £1,177,425 net. He left £1,000 to the Royal Society and Garter House, Richmond.

Mr Charles Watson Warrell, of Matlock, Derbyshire, creator of the I-Spy books, left estate valued at £287,241 net.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Kent, President, attends the exhibition "Together: the Commonwealth in War", at the Imperial War Museum, London SE1.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mount the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Scots Guards.

Birthdays

Mr George Baker, actor and writer, 65; Mr Cynog Dafis MP 58; Mr David Davies, chairman and chief executive, Johnson Matthey, 50; The Rev Norman Drummond, Scottish Governor, BBC, and Chairman, Broadcasting Council for Scotland, 44; Mr Alex Falconer, MEP, 56; Professor Rodrick Floud, Provost, London Guildhall University, 54; Sir Anthony Gill, chairman, Docklands Light Railway, 66; Mr David Gower, cricketer, 39; Sir Nicholas Henderson, former diplomat, 77; Miss Gail Johnston Houghton, jockey, 55; The Earl of Lichfield, managing director, County Border Newspapers, 76; Baroness McFarlane of Llandaff, Professor Emeritus, Department of Nursing, Manchester University, 70; Professor Maxwell McCluskey, chemist, 72; Miss Ali MacGraw, film actress, 58; Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, High Court judge, 78; Mr William Manchester, author and history professor, 74; Maj-Gen Giles Mills, former resident Governor, Tower of London, 74; Professor Sir Dimitri Obolensky, historian, 78; Mrs Marie Patterson, former TUC president, 62; Miss Jane Powell, singer and actress, 67; Mr Charles H. Price, former US ambassador to the UK, 65; Mr Steve Race, musician and broadcaster, 75; Dr Richard Repp, Master of St Cross College, Oxford, 60; Miss Debbie Reynolds, actress, 64; Mr Bryan Robertson, author, historian and broadcaster, 71; Mr Arnold Sidebottom, cricketer, 42; Mr Leonard van Gucht, chairman, Litewoods, 40; Mr Dafydd Wigley MP 53.

writer, 1897; Prince Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck, statesman, 1815; Edwin Austin Abbey, painter, 1857; Ferruccio Benvenuto Busoni, musician, 1866; Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninov, composer, 1873; Edgar Richard Horatio Wallace, journalist and thriller writer, 1875; Lon (Alonso) Chaney, actor, 1883; Wallace Beery, actor, 1885; Clemence Ogilvy, Barney, Sir, Sir, Sir, Sir, Churchill, widow of Sir Winston Churchill, 1885; Leonard Bloomfield, linguist, 1887; Dame Cicely Courtneidge, actress, 1893. Deaths: Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of France and of England, 1204; Robert III, King of Scotland, 1406; Dr John Langhorne, writer, cleric and translator, 1779; Dr Isaac Milner, theologist and mathematician, 1820; Chester Harding, portrait painter, 1866; John Frederick Denison Maurice, theologian and founder of Christian Socialism, 1872; Emperor Karl Franz, Josef of Austria, 1922; Mortimer Menpes, painter and etcher, 1938; John Atkinson Hobson, economist, 1940; Lev Davidovich Landau, physicist, 1968; Max Ernst, Surrealist painter and sculptor, 1976; René Guénon, journalist and broadcaster, 1984; Elizabeth de Beauchamp Goudge, author, 1984. On this day: the telephone link between London and Paris was officially opened, 1891; the Territorial Army was founded, 1908; old age pensions were first paid (to British subjects over the age of 70), 1909; the first aviation unit of the British army was formed, the Air Battalion, Royal Engineers, 1911; the Royal Air Force came into being, 1918; Adolf Hitler was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, 1924; a Hebrew university was inaugurated by Lord Balfour on Mount Scopus, Jerusalem, 1925; persecution of the Jews in Germany began, 1933; London's Green Belt legislation came into being, 1935; electricity undertakings in Britain,

both private and municipal, were nationalised as the British Electricity Authority, 1947; Newfoundland, up to this date a separate Dominion, became the 10th province of Canada, 1949; the world's first meteorological satellite was launched, Tios 1 1960; 590 US prisoners were released by the North Vietnamese, 1973; Purchase Tax and Selective Employment Tax were abolished in Britain, and Value Added Tax (VAT) took their place, 1973; boundary changes were made in England and Wales, affecting all counties, 1974. Today is the Feast Day of St Catharine of Palma, St Gilbert of Carthage, St Hugh of Bascour, St Hugh of Grenoble, St Macarius the Wonderworker, St Melio and St Valery or Valerius.

There are no role models in the Gospels for women of doubt – the women there found healing and strength in simply touching the hem of Jesus' garment, and they sat at his feet to receive his teachings. They waited at the foot of the Cross during his agonising death, and to one of them he was revealed on Easter morning. Where is the woman with whom I can identify, a woman who is a kindred spirit in doubt?

I feel a strong affinity with the disciples who deserted Jesus at the time of his arrest because he did not fulfil their expectations. He did not live up to their idea of a Messiah or Saviour; so they in turn were overcome by the fear of what would be demanded of them. I am married to someone whose vocation gives people expectations of me. Because of my gender and country of birth, people have expectations of me, and make assumptions. The people I counsel have expectations of my counselling skills. All this should strengthen me, but sometimes makes me weak.

In my work as a bereavement counsellor I must stay with the dark and pain of

The powerful silences of Holy Week

Advent is a time of expectation and anticipation. Lent is a time of preparation and promise. Yet, for me, Lent is a time of apprehension – and Holy Week the days when apprehension reaches a climax. I may not be alone in feeling that Lent, like autumn, is my natural habitat. I am drawn to the dark, the austere, and the wistful. I find the sunset at the close of day more appealing than the sunrise. I am more at home in moorland than in tropics, and I am moved by music in a minor key. And I am, for reasons I do not fully understand, a sceptic.

There are no role models in the Gospels for women of doubt – the women there found healing and strength in simply touching the hem of Jesus' garment, and they sat at his feet to receive his teachings. They waited at the foot of the Cross during his agonising death, and to one of them he was revealed on Easter morning. Where is the woman with whom I can identify, a woman who is a kindred spirit in doubt?

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Arguments for Easter

All through Holy Week we will be running a series of Easter meditations: this, the first, is by Jean Holloway, a bereavement counsellor whose husband, Richard, is Bishop of Edinburgh.

my clients, or I am of no use to them. A grieving woman told me of the dark which surrounds her, and when I asked if she saw any light at all, she replied that the only glimmer of light was her own death. And yet I believe she will find some door to the future edge open, or some hope to give her enough light to see her way ahead. I will then leave her to make her own way. My work ends when her way ahead becomes possible, and then I will see another person for whom bereavement makes the future unthinkable. But I cannot lead a light, or force the door. I can only be alongside in the dark until the memories become bearable and the future can be contemplated.

I was impressed by the response to the Dunblane tragedy, when many admitted that silence was the only appropriate response. Yet one Dunblane woman appealed me. She said in a radio interview: "People's memories are short. We will get back to normal life." She repeated this, but she was twice wrong. People have memories which last a lifetime, and in old

age it is the recent memories which fade, while the distant ones become more vivid. Jews do not forget the Holocaust, the people of Aberfan do not forget their children, and the parents and people of Dunblane will not forget 13 March.

And yet, it is Holy Week in all its sombre and reflective time that draws me back again and again – the reverse of the moth to the flame, for it is the darkness that I feel is real, and in which meaning is to be found. It is the silence of Holy Week rather than the shouts of alleluia that is so powerful. The valley of the shadow of death, stretching between Hosannas and Al-leluia, speaks to all people. Death is an inescapable experience, and whatever is on the other side of death will come to all, whether believing or sceptical.

So my apprehension at this time of year is due to the knowledge that at dawn on Easter Sunday there will be rejoicing, but that I will feel I am on the margins. I will open myself to the message that death is conquered and that the world should rejoice. And I will be glad for those for whom this message transforms life and death.

It might seem from the foregoing that I am verging on clinical depression or melancholia, but I experience great joy in the things of this world. I revel in beauty, and I delight in the incongruous and the absurd. I am constantly grateful for my eyesight and hearing through which profoundly uplifting experiences can be received, and for love and laughter and life. But Holy Week is a time when I reach into depths of meaning, confront the momentous mysteries of life and death, and feel the enormous paradox of being utterly alone and at one with all who live and die.

09/11/2015

Caution expected as a nervous market waits for takeover action

As takeover action goes it does not come much heavier than BT and Cable & Wireless; if talks are successful it could create a £35bn deal, far bigger than anything the stock market has experienced.

It could, therefore, be argued the market has got the deal it so desperately wanted and shares should move ahead.

But there is not much chance of dramatic progress this week. The long Easter holiday will prompt a cautious approach and the end of the financial year, whilst possibly encouraging a deluge of tax-effective bed-and-breakfast deals, will merely produce a little window dressing activity.

The BT/Cable talks face a multitude of hurdles and are given no more than a 75 per cent chance of succeeding.

But two big deals hover. This week, or next, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission should produce its

conclusions on the National Power and PowerGen bids for distributors Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity.

It is widely expected that the proposed deals will be cleared. If, however, the bids are blocked the two cash-rich generators are expected to embark on share buy-back programmes and pay special dividends.

Salomon Brothers, the US investment house, has said NP and PG shares are at least 30 per cent undervalued.

Last week the market put on a pretty uninspiring display, despite growing rumours of extensive corporate action. The failure of the "good to talk" negotiations to set shares alight stems from the growing political nature of the market.

A stampede to get corporate action completed before there is any danger of a Labour government meddling in bids and deals is the favourite scenario. However, as the year drags on

thoughts - and fears - of the Labour approach if it does win power are bound to colour sentiment.

Another indication of the more nervous nature of the market is its willingness to be influenced by bad news and pay little attention to more cheerful omens.

For example, a New York slump will hit shares but an upsurge is likely to leave little impression. US payroll figures, due next week, recently caused alarm and despondency. Still, as they will not be published until Good Friday, any impact this time will be postponed until after Easter.

Goldman Sachs, the US investment house, cites political influences as one of the reasons for its bearish stance. It thinks the market has peaked and reduced its forecast for end June to 3,600 points.

It says: "We believe the equity market is now entering



STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

a classic bear market phase - where prices fall over time, even though the market is up more days than it is down - and we would strongly reiterate our advice to adopt an underweight and defensive position."

Increasing gilt yields and uncertain company profits also worry Goldman, which adds: "Political risk is likely to be increasingly priced into the market as funds go underweight in the UK, preferring foreign equity markets."

Goldman's longer term Footsie forecast - covering 12-18 months - is 3,400. But it takes many views to make a market and Société Générale Strauss-Tumbull is

much more positive. Its Footsie forecast is 4,130 to 4,250 for June and it is shooting for 4,000-plus at the end of the year. Since peaking at 3,781.3 in February, Footsie has moved narrowly. The supporting index, covering the 250 shares outside the blue-chip club, has, however, picked up a strong head of steam. They closed at another record high on Friday.

If there are any shocks next week the market should be able to tap into a drop of the hard stuff to steady its nerves.

On Monday, Macallan Glenlivet, the famous malt whisky producer, reports, followed by The Highland Distilleries Co on Tuesday.

Although the world whisky market remains weak, the Scotch double should manage progress. NatWest Securities, the investment house with a strong north-of-the-Border influence, sees MacGlen producing a year's figure of £7.38m against £6.69m and Highland, the Famous Grouse group, making interim profits of £24.8m, up from £23.7m. The two whisky houses have close links with Remy Cointreau, the French brandy and champagne group.

Big guns reporting this week include Burmah Castrol (today) and Tarmac (tomorrow). Excellent figures from Burmah's quoted Indian offshoot in February have encouraged the market to look for around £250m, up from £219.5m.

Tarmac, following its assets exchange with George Wimpey, is now a pure aggregates/construction hybrid. Williams

de Broe expects profits of £97m before losses on a construction contract. Last year the group achieved profits of £107.2m.

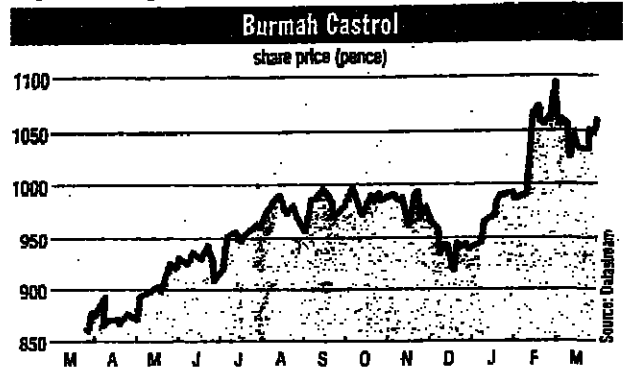
Alfred McAlpine is another builder featuring in this week's diary. It reports on Thursday when a little changed £10.5m is the expectation.

Friendly Hotels is scheduled for Thursday. The industry's trading climate has

improved quite significantly, with even the struggling Queens Most Houses making a much better showing than many expected last week.

The group should have shared in the revival and Greig Middleton is forecasting £4.34m, up from £3.65m.

Friendly is the third quoted creation by veteran hotelier Henry Edwards, who has 8.65 per cent of the shares.



Alcoholic Beverages

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Beck's	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Carlsberg	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Carlsberg	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Carlsberg	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Banks, Merchant

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Barclays	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Barclays	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Barclays	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Barclays	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Barclays	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Banks, Retail

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
ABN-Amro	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
ABN-Amro	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
ABN-Amro	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
ABN-Amro	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
ABN-Amro	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Building/Construction

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Building Materials

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Chemicals

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Electronics

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Engineering

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Engineering Vehicles

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Extractive Industries

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Food Manufacturers

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Gas Distribution

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Health Care

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Household Goods

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Diversified Industrials

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Engineering

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Engineering Vehicles

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Extractive Industries

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Food Manufacturers

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Gas Distribution

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Health Care

Stock	Price	Chg	Ytd	P/E	Div
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Adnoca	12.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

Household Goods

73	Chrysler Gr	735	+6	17	251	2053
74	Chrysler	685	+5	04	369	1930
75	Daimler-Benz Sy	410	+9	49	339	2333
76	Daim	410	+9	49	339	2333
77	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
78	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
79	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
80	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
81	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
82	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
83	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
84	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
85	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
86	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
87	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
88	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
89	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
90	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
91	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
92	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
93	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
94	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
95	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
96	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
97	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
98	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
99	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000
100	Daimler-Benz	59	+9	33	166	2000

BT backs Germans to buy Mercury

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Deutsche Telekom, the giant German telecom group, is British Telecommunications' preferred buyer for Mercury Communications, the UK's second-biggest telephone company, following any merger with Cable & Wireless, Mercury's parent.

BT believes that bringing in Deutsche, which is to be privatised later this year, would open up the British telephones market to real competition for the first time. It would also ease the pressure from the regulator, Ofcom, which has caused BT's recent share price to underperform the market drastically.

The Mercury sell-off, along with the disposal of C&W's Mercury One-2-One mobile telephones operations, will almost certainly be forced on BT

by government competition rules, if a merger goes ahead. But BT, to which Peter Bonfield of BT, recently moved to become chief executive, will be in a strong position to dictate terms if a £35bn merger with C&W can be consummated. The Government is said to have given "more than a nod and a wink" to the deal as part of a desire to have a strong UK champion in the telecommunications industry.

Observers say it is ready to use its golden share to block any foreign takeover of C&W, which is putting pressure on the group to reach agreement with BT.

Adding to that pressure is the continued failure of C&W to find a new chief executive. The group, which has been rudderless since both its former chairman, Lord Young, and chief executive, James Ross, were ousted last year, is said to have



It's good to talk: Cable & Wireless's London offices seen from a BT callbox

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

lined up an American to fill the top executive post, but he will not move until the outcome of the merger talks is clear.

The sale of Mercury to Deutsche would give the British group a well capitalised parent which, like BT, is having to make a rapid transformation from state-owned to private sector operator. Deutsche,

which is due to float in a £7bn privatisation later this year, has been interested in picking up Mercury for some time. BT's chairman, Sir Iain Vallance, maintained close links with Helmut Rieke, the German group's chairman until his resignation in 1994. Sir Iain gave advice on the privatisation and in the course of many discussions the subject

of a possible deal between BT and C&W was raised, leading to Deutsche's initial interest in Mercury.

The possibility was revived last year when a BT executive made a courtesy call on Deutsche in December, and again within the past fortnight.

But Deutsche will not have the field all to itself. AT&T, the

US telecoms giant, and Nynex, a US "baby bell" which owns the second-largest cable operator in the UK, are being seen as serious rival bidders. AT&T has already held discussions with C&W over Mercury, but the price demanded was too high.

US West, C&W's partner in the Mercury One-2-One mobile telephone operation, has right of first refusal over the British group's 50 per cent stake, valued at around £800m by analysts.

At present the talks between BT and C&W are only being conducted through merchant banking advisers - Rothschilds for BT, Goldman Sachs and ING Barings for C&W - and the two sides stress that they are in no hurry to complete a deal.

A BT spokesman yesterday refused to comment, beyond saying that reports the company was ready to sell Mercury to a US consortium of investors were "without foundation". However, the Independent is aware that a buying group has been put together and has made an approach for the company.



Giant sell-off: Ron Sommer, Deutsche's chairman

A lesson in competition ahead of 1998

A takeover of Mercury Communications by Deutsche Telekom would give the German group a privileged position in the third largest and most liberalised telecoms market in Europe, writes Magnus Grimond.

It would also provide useful experience in a liberalised market before the EU is opened up to competition in 1998.

At present, the European Union is still dominated by state-owned telecom operators, apart from the UK, where there are 150 licensed groups offering services in competition to BT.

That is set to change, not least following Deutsche's own privatisation, later this year. The sale of the world's third largest telecoms group is likely to be the biggest privatisation yet seen anywhere. With due fanfare it was kicked off last month by Deutsche chairman Ron Sommer. Flanked by Theo Waigel, Germany's finance minister, and Wolfgang Botsch, minister of posts and telecoms. The first tranche of shares, worth £7bn, is scheduled to be sold to the public in November, with another due to go in 1998.

However, the privatisation has been dogged by problems and must still surmount a lack of enthusiasm among both staff and a German populace not used to holding shares. The departure of Mr Sommer's predecessor, Helmut Rieke, in 1994 was said to have been prompted by frustration at his failure to gain agreement from trade unions for large scale voluntary redundancies.

Last November, Mr Sommer reached a deal with the unions whereby 60,000 jobs would be cut by the year 2000,

reducing the workforce to 170,000. But morale within the group is now said to be rock-bottom, with over half the 2,000 senior executives ready to leave. Meanwhile, Deutsche has not endeared itself to customers with a complicated new tariff this year, which raised charges by an average 3.8 per cent and caused street protests in Berlin. It also disappointed analysts last month when it announced that sales had risen only 4 per cent to DM66bn last year, around DM2bn lower than a forecast made the previous June.

Flow of new issues is drying up

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

The new issues market continued to stagnate in the first quarter of the year despite the stock market being relatively stable and within a whisker of its all time high - usually ideal conditions for flotations.

In the first three months of 1996 only 16 companies achieved full listings, down from 22 in the first quarter of 1995, itself a disappointing year.

According to Neil Austin, new issues specialist in the corporate finance department of KPMG, the accountancy and consulting firm, one factor has been the unexpected success of the Alternative Investment Market. The relative ease and cheapness of gaining an AIM listing, he believes, has side-tracked many companies that might otherwise have gone for the full market.

"AIM is clearly the appropriate market for smaller com-

panies as it has a lighter regulatory touch and is easier to join," Mr Austin said. "Owners of companies are also casting an eye at the possibility of a change of government and possibly consequent higher tax rates. This provides a spur to sell and the ready availability of purchasers with cash means a sale may yield as good a value as a flotation."

The cash value of main-market flotations between January and March was about

£1bn, which compared favourably with last year's full year total of £2.6bn.

More than two thirds of that, however, was accounted for by investment trust flotations, which raised £709m in the quarter.

The most high-profile flotation of the period, the Orange mobile phone issue, which raised £624m, was not included in KPMG's figures because dealings in the shares remain conditional until 2 April.

Sears to launch loyalty schemes

NIGEL COPE

Sears, the retail group which includes Selfridges, is set to launch a series of credit cards and loyalty schemes across the group in an attempt to develop a more extensive database on its customers' shopping habits.

Sears already operates a Selfridges credit card which gives exclusive offers on promotions. It is now looking at a system which will enable shoppers to pay via their normal Visa or

Access card but build up points on a loyalty scheme. The trial will start this summer.

Sears business development director Ian Cheshire said: "We didn't want to do a Tesco and launch a loyalty card as people can get annoyed about having yet another card in their purse or wallet. This scheme means they can use their normal card and we can still offer rewards while developing our database."

Sears is testing a card in its Adam children's wear chain

and hopes to roll it out later this year. A "budget" card is under trial in the Shoe Express discount shoe stores and this may also be extended.

The Wallis and Richards women's wear groups are testing database schemes that reward customers with early previews of seasonal sales and other promotions.

Sears has employed Dunn-Humby Associates, which worked on Tesco's ClubCard, to help analyse the data.

Dunn-Humby will be looking at the possible launch of smart cards to help Sears develop a closer relationship with its 8 million UK customers.

Around 11 per cent of Sears sales are already made using the SearsCard, which has nearly 500,000 accounts. Sears is also considering installing multimedia kiosks in Selfridges linked to customers' charge cards. The idea is the kiosks will "recognise" customers and flash promotions or suggestions on screen.

IN BRIEF

- **Maiden Group**, the outdoor advertising company, is to announce today it intends to seek a listing on the London Stock Exchange, aimed at raising £20m. Its advisers forecast a market capitalisation of not less than £65m. The company, a UK leader in large-sheet outdoor adverts, intends to use the proceeds to reduce debt.
- **Carlton Communications**, Michael Green's media company, saw its share of revenues from advertising on ITV fall in London year-on-year in the first quarter, according to ITV's own figures. Carlton, which runs the ITV franchise for London in the week, saw its share drop year-on-year to just over 16 per cent from 17.3 per cent in February alone, largely at the hands of Granada's LWT, the franchise holder for London weekend, whose share jumped by 15 per cent.
- **The UK economy** is set to expand by 2.3 per cent in 1996, and next year could be the country's best for consumer spending since 1989, according to the latest forecast by the Ernest & Young Item Club. The recent period of slow growth was a result of a temporary stock adjustment, the group says, adding that sufficient measures have already been taken to ensure that unemployment is prevented from rising significantly over the next 12 months.
- **High Street banks** will have to invest £300m each to prepare for the introduction of a single currency, according to figures published today by BMS Bossard, the European management consultancy. The figure could rise to £500m if the banks delay further.
- **Glaxo-Wellcome**, the leading British drugs company, has ended controversial payments made to certain directors for acting as pension fund trustees. The payments of up to £20,000 a year came on top of other directors' remuneration, and were viewed as being inconsistent with the recommendations of the Greenbury report on directors' pay.

UK labour record challenged

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Britain's job creation record is little better than that of its main industrialised rivals, according to a new report published today.

The study, released to coincide with the start of the two-day Group of Seven jobs summit in Lille, France, is likely to disappoint the British government, which hopes that the summit of the big industrial countries will endorse its view that deregulation of the labour market is the most effective way to create jobs and reduce unemployment.

The Independent Employment Policy Institute argues that the only time employment growth in Britain has been higher than in the other G7 countries was during the unsustainable late-1980s boom.

"The pay-off in terms of extra jobs in Britain has not been spectacular in European terms, let alone in comparison with the

G7 unemployment rate (%)	
US	5.5
Japan	3.3
Germany	11.1
France	11.8
Italy	12.2
UK	7.9
Canada	9.6
Average	8.8

US, according to EPI director John Philpott.

Some officials from other countries at the summit predict that the event will be a damp squib. Partly due to British insistence that contentious issues should be kept off the agenda, the final statement is likely to be a "lowest common denominator" endorsement of sound macro-economic policy and structural reform.

This means that some countries are unenthusiastic about

the meeting of employment and Treasury ministers. The US and France, for example, would have liked to include the scope for "social clauses" in trade agreements. These would incorporate trade penalties against developing countries deemed to have an unfair cost advantage by exploiting child labour or indentured workers, for example. But Britain was joined by Canada and Japan in opposing a discussion.

The Americans would also have liked to include an assessment of active government labour market programmes such as retraining.

A further dampener will be the inability of France and Germany to admit that unemployment could be made worse by the need for European countries to reduce their government deficits simultaneously in order to qualify for the single currency. All of the governments stress the importance of deficit reduction - or "fiscal consolidation" in the G7 jargon.

The tone for the summit will be set by an opening paper presented today by Jean-Claude Paye, the outgoing director general of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Drawing on work commissioned by the last G7 jobs summit, in Detroit two years ago, the OECD emphasises the need for growth based on higher skills and knowledge. It will stress that governments play an essential role in this.

The rich countries' think tank has already criticised Britain for weaknesses in education and training. These shortcomings are acknowledged by Employment and Education Minister Gillian Shepherd, who is eager to avoid a triumphalist tone about Britain's relatively low unemployment rate. "We lag behind our competitors in areas such as skill levels," she says.

The summit will focus tomorrow on how to improve job prospects and incomes for the unskilled and others "excluded" from the jobs market.

"How could anyone leave poor Gypsy to suffer like this?"



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Claire Chapman Head Girl.
ILPH Rest & Rehabilitation Centre, Norfolk.

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STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	YTD High	YTD Low	YTD High	YTD Low
FTSE 100	3899.70	-7.3	-0.2	3781.30	2954.20	4.01			
FTSE 250	4326.70	+22.4	+0.5	4326.70	3300.90	3.42			
FTSE 350	1863.80	-0.8	-0.0	1869.00	1482.40	3.88			
FT Small Cap	2095.45	+8.9	+0.4	2095.45	1878.61	3.06			
FT All Share	1843.44	-0.1	-0.0	1864.59	1469.23	3.81			
New York	5587.14	-49.5	-0.9	5683.60	3832.08	2.13			
Tokyo	21406.85	+705.9	+3.4	21406.85	14485.40	0.741			
Hong Kong	10957.20	-88.5	-0.6	11194.48	6967.93	3.261			
Frankfurt	2485.87	-18.1	-0.7	2525.42	1910.98	1.931			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
US interest rates									
Money Market Rates									
Index	1 Month	1 Year	3 Month	6 Month	9 Month	12 Month	18 Month	24 Month	36 Month
UK	6.00	6.38	6.18	6.36	6.28	6.50			
US	5.41	5.88	5.38	5.21	5.69	7.44			
Japan	0.56	0.88	1.76	3.58					
Germany	2.25	3.38	8.44	7.18	7.16				

CURRENCIES

£/\$

£/DM

Pound vs.

	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago
\$ (London)	1.5285	-0.03c	1.5645
\$ (N York)	1.5285	-0.03c	1.5686
DM (London)	2.2537	-1.05d	2.425
¥ (London)	163.030	+0.802	156.09
£ Index	83.4	-0.5	88.5

Dollar vs.

	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago
£ (London)	0.6551	+0.35	0.639
£ (N York)	0.6551	+0.43	0.638
DM (London)	1.4794	+0.11d	1.55
¥ (London)	106.800	+0.055	99.77
\$ Index	95.8	unch	96.1

OTHER INDICATORS

	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago		Index	Last Wk	Yr Ago	Most Freq
Oil Brent \$	19.35	-0.27	17.43	RPI	150.9	+2.7pc	146.9	18 Apr
Gold \$	396.95	-1.15	391.73	GDP	167.0	+2.0pc	166.1	29 Apr
Gold £	259.28	+0.16	240.51	Base Rates		-6.00pc	6.75	—

MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Rises - Top 5	Price	High	Low	Change	Falls - Top 5	Price	High	Low	Change
Securicor Group	1190	210	213	9.12	Environchem Plc	64.5	9	12.2	
London Ints Mkt	119	10.5	9.7	0.8	Devo Intl	227	25	9.9	
Next	507.5	48.5	8.4	0.8	Northern Foods	181	18	9.0	

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SCIENCE

The aquatic apewoman

We're naked because we evolved in tropical seas. **Andrew Brown** meets the writer who has set the Internet buzzing with a forgotten theory

In a Victorian house in a Welsh mining village lives a 75-year-old woman with no scientific training and a startling theory about human evolution, which she has defended in numerous books and now in "flame" (ie. insult) wars raging on the Internet. And if the world is too full of people with startling theories of human evolution, what makes Elaine Morgan unique is that her theory may very well be true. The Aquatic Ape theory holds that humans differ from other primates because their ancestors spent some evolutionarily significant time as wading and swimming animals. She discovered it in the writings of Sir Alister Hardy, FRS, an enormously distinguished zoologist who noted in 1965 that most of the adaptations that distinguish humans from chimpanzees, say, are also found in aquatic animals and not elsewhere.

Hardy's idea was largely ignored. It was Elaine Morgan who popularised the theory, first in *The Descent of Woman*, a bestseller in 1972, and in a succession of later books, of which *The Descent of the Child* has just been reissued in paperback. All these look at the differences between humans and other primates and argue that most of the remarkable ones are best explained by supposing that our ancestors spent a million years or so as shoreline-dwellers. There they lost their fur and developed fat for insulation instead; there, with the water to buoy them up, they had to learn to walk upright. She has even argued that the water's dazle made vocal language necessary because the traditional primate "language" of gestures and facial expression was harder to use in that environment.

When she came across the Aquatic Ape theory she was 52, with a long and successful career as a television writer behind her, having started in television's pioneer days. The first few times a play of hers was broadcast she and her husband had to ask a neighbour if they could go round to watch it. Later, she won Bafta awards and dramatised *A Testament of Youth*. Her controversial writings are more elegant, clear and vigorous than most popular sci-



Origin of the species: Elaine Morgan, from South Wales, debates her Aquatic Ape theory on the Internet

Photograph: Rob Stratton

ence and, by the same token, incomparably more persuasive and easier to follow than real science. No wonder her professional readers regard her with suspicion. She also understands evolution and natural selection – a much rarer accomplishment than it ought to be: like Stephen Jay Gould, she sees that the most powerful evidence of evolution is not the perfection of our adaptations, but their imperfections.

Yet Morgan has no formal

scientific training, no formal links with any university. Until she discovered the Net, she had no regular correspondence with palaeontologists. She writes for the reasonable, intelligent and generally educated outsider, and she thinks as one, too. No wonder academics assume she must be wrong.

'It seems a remarkably consistent pattern that the things that we have got, like the naked skin and the fat, are adaptations found in aquatic mammals'

There are further problems. The academic standing of the Aquatic Ape theory "has been weakened because it is the undergraduates who pick it up; and if you're a professor of anthropology, you hear this stuff coming out of the mouths of people you know are nits so you don't take it seriously," she says. The Aquatic Ape theory seems to have become one of the folk myths of American uni-

versities, a pseudo-scientific dream of prelapsarian paradise by a warm Indian ocean. "The sort of place where deadheads would feel at home," one graduate student wrote contemptuously on the Net.

There is a certain irony in this fate, for *The Descent of Woman*, the first aquatic ape book, was not inspired by scientific zeal so much as by zeal against pseudo-science: the myth of primitive man as a hunter and killer which was

too. So in *The Descent of Woman* the Aquatic Ape theory emerged as a work of feminism. The real enemy was not the palaeontological establishment, but the *Flintstones*.

Over the years her arguments have grown more sophisticated, but she didn't have her books read by professionals. She just plugged away, convinced that common sense and application could not lead her too far astray. "I would go up and listen to lectures if I heard they were coming off, but I am not connected with any university."

But when she discovered the Net last autumn her position changed radically. "Now I'm learning what are the weak points of the theory. My approach has been to start from the fact that we are remarkably different in a remarkable amount of ways from our closest relatives and to try to find an explanation. It seems to me a remarkably consistent pattern that the things that we have got, like the naked skin and the fat, are adaptations found in aquatic mammals."

The elegance and economy of the central thrust of the theory has won her a distinguished fan club. Daniel Dennett, probably the world's most fashionable philosopher, gave her three pages of consideration in his latest book, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*. When she was last in Oxford, she was taken to supper by Douglas Adams and Richard Dawkins. The hypothesis has been treated imaginatively in a novel by Peter Dickinson. None of these people, however, are palaeoanthropologists; and on the Net Morgan's ideas are handled more roughly.

Hairy legs are sexier, especially for spiders

Male animals go to extreme lengths to attract the opposite sex. Sanjida O'Connell reports

Females are fickle. Once they decide something's attractive, any male who wants a look-in has to have it – or grow it. Witness the beautiful tail of the peacock. In the mating game, males fight or display to females who then choose the biggest or the brightest male. Widow birds, for example, have exceptionally long tails and females go for the male with the longest, even if the tail is beyond the realms of biological possibility and has been enhanced with glue, spare feathers and the aid of a biologist. Female zebra finches are so capricious, they will pick males with red plastic rings around their legs.

Now animal behaviourists Dr Sonja Scheffer, from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, George Uetz, from Albion College, and Gail Stratton, from the University of Cincinnati, have discovered that male brush-legged wolf spiders have evolved black bristly tufts of hair on their front legs to attract females.

The spiders, which live in leaf litter in east American forests, have an elaborate courtship that involves waving and arching their legs at a female. The aim of the game is to mate with her, but in the case of these spiders, as in many of their brethren, avoiding ending up as brunch is of equal consideration. Females that are not ready to mate will lunge towards males with fangs bared and, if given the chance, will kill and eat them. Nearly half of all males are cannibalised after copulation – a male spider's tactic is to freeze in the hope she'll think he's a leaf and not lunch.

Dr Scheffer and her colleagues wondered whether the male's bristly bits were crucial to a female spider's idea of sexiness. They offered females a choice of two males: one complete with tufts, and one that the researchers had shaved. The females seemed to show no

preference for males with or without tufts. They mated with the bravest – or most foolhardy – male who was the first to court them. The researchers then tried another approach. They prevented the females from listening to the males.

As well as the elaborate leg waving procedure, males signal to the females by sending vibrations along the ground using their stridulatory organs. The researchers deprived the spiders of sound by placing them on insulating foam. Without the benefit of this extra sense, the females chose males who still had tufts and spurned the short



Leggy: the wolf spider

spiders. Dr Scheffer concluded that tufts are essential in the mating arena. Female spiders have got good eye-sight, but vibrations do not travel well along the forest floor. A male will thus come into a female's visual range long before she can hear who he is. Since females are prone to eat males once they have performed their function, and are partial to other species of spider, it makes sense for a male to advertise as well as he can who he is and what he is about. A spider's tufts may also act as signal to other males. When spiders live in high densities, they establish the arachnid equivalent of a pecking order. Presumably those with the biggest bristles get to be top of the leaf litter.

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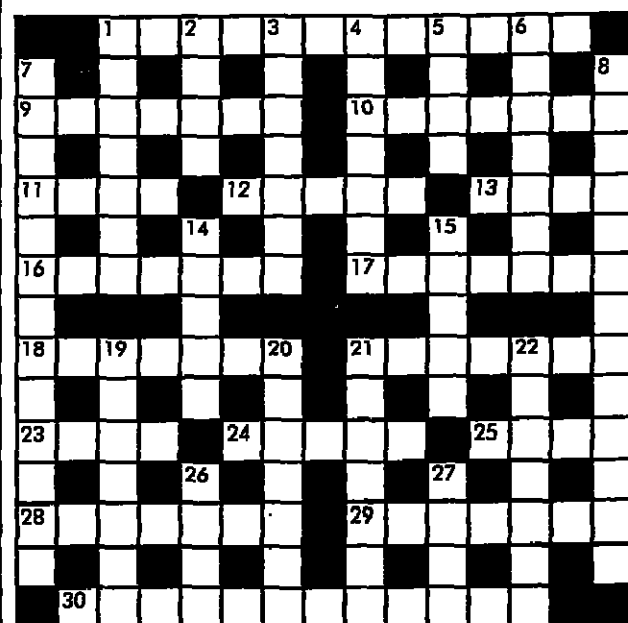
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2949, Monday 1 April

By Puria



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